• LIFESTYLE
Jim Paredes takes a different sort of hike

• BUSINESS/B1
Inside the Inquirer: Business Section all biz and buzz

• WORLD/A8
No. 3 al-Qaida leader killed in Pakistan

• ENTERTAINMENT
Laurice on departure from film council: 'I felt very humiliated'

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, December 5, 2005 • 44 pages / vol. 20 / no. 348

US doctors note sagging sales of impotence drugs

SEVEN FAMILIES
Pfizer made Virginia suffered heartbreak and astronomical bankbreaks that treated for impotence medicines up years to have fallen until almost all whatsoever cases are dismal.

SEE PAGE A-12

'Lion of Sea' retires

By Jose Orosalia
Local Matters

THE OLD ACTIVIST AVERAGE to the military longest, is is not easy to shake off after 20 years of Cam. Rabe, on the open.

The situation is not helped by Maj. Gen. Carlos

SEE LEON

KEEPER OF THE TRUTH! After five months on the run, ex-Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano says he's ready to tell all.

Garci in Metro, vows to reveal phone pals

By Michael Lim Ubac

ON A RANCHO-STYLE BEACH ... HOUSE, a month ago ended yesterday when a white speedboat carrying hooded men approached on the horizon beyond the Metro Gulf.

When the boat hit the beach, the widely maligned former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano popped up from behind the steering controls and said he was ready to face a casino to know would be desperate of him.

Garcillano's long journey from parts unknown ended on a deserted beach in Bataan Gov. Enrique Garcia, Magsaysay, where he voluntarily turned himself over to the authorities.

Brought back from the boat in US$7 vans and smiling proudly, the country's most elusive man received a letter hand-carried by House surgeon-senator Rogelio Noble, inviting him to appear on Dec. 7 at the House of Representatives' joint probe into the "Hello Garci" scandal.

But all the well-group made little look like he was lifted right out of an Indiana Journeyman.

Garcillano said he was ready to restart "step by step" the publication who ended or personally saw him during last year's election.

Some of their even roamed him to lunch or dinner or a pub hosted in Manila, he said.

His lawyer said Garcillano would start talking today.

"I hope they will not deny because every time I would move up, guys high officials, I had somebody with me," Garcillano said.

Many of the newspapered radio...numbering 13 or 15, by some accounts—supposedly came from Presidential Musicgagal Actress, sparking an explosive political crisis that outraged the nation, inspired coup plots and nearly toppled last Ends of Arroyo.

"I will face public opinion and risk vilification by people who have done nothing except to destroy my reputation," Garcillano said.

He vowed to "answer to all the / have come from a dedicated public of Arroyo."

One opposition senator on hearing

PAGE A-10

SEAG champion at last

RP team bags 113 golds and counting

By Ray Loreto

THERE'S NO DENYING THE Philippines the overall title this time.

Pounding the opposition on various fronts, Team Philippines yesterday clinched its first ever overall championship of the Southeast Asian Games with a Day 8 deluge of 23 golds, pulling away from the opposition and rendering today's closing events no bearing.

Passing its best ever haul of 113 golds, 78 silvers and 85 bronzes, the Philippines marched beyond the reach of Thailand which had a 86-79-114 tally and Vietnam with a 66-83-85 output.

The Filipinos thus buried the harrowing memory of the 1991 Manila SEAG, which the general championship was won down to the last event, the marathon, with the Indonesians prevailing by a solitary gold, 93-91, after topping the women's event.

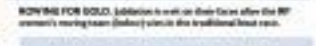
Finally, after 49 years of fruitless campaigns, the Filipinos can claim to be the region's best in the biennial meet involving 11 nations, including war-ravaged Timor-Leste.

The crushing boat race team sealed the event that best symbolized the biggest push in the country's title drive yesterday when they secured three gold each.

The Filipino rowers emerged victorious in the men's and women's 500m, 20 a side and the men's 500m 20-a-side while rowing that

SEE PAGE A-10

DEVVING OLD GLORY The Philippine team shows how it feels as the baseball champions in the SEA Games competitions.



ROWING FOR GOLD. Jubilation is writ on their faces after the RP women's rowing team (below) wins in the traditional boat race.

MUSCLE MAN Michael Barrenago gets a perfect score of 10 in winning the bantamweight (51 kg) title in bodybuilding.

Games ruled today in Luneta. Page A10

Bonds of solidarity, friendship matter most, says GMA

By Christine O. Avendaño

JUST LIKE IN THE "HELLO GARCI" CONTROversy, Ormoden was ganged-up—would earlier put chance to allegations of dumping made by Thailand in the Southeast Asian Games.

"In this SEAG biennial event came to end, we join our fourteen team neighbors in lowering a mark of renewed cooperation and unity in the region to enable us to face challenges of world competition in areas of trade, investments and tourism, and to forge enduring regional security," the President said in a statement greeting the

"More than the medals proudly reaped in the Games, what matters is how this event would further cool the bonds that envelope our region into a higher level of solidarity and friendship for the nations's good along our partner ASEAN Cousins that the Thai-Asean, Our heritage," she said.

Last week, the SEA Games was engulfed in controversy after Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra questioned the Samoan

PAGE A-10

Davide's legacy of activism: Break or continuity

By Amando Doronila

THE RETIREMENT OF CHIEF JUSTICE HILario Davide Jr. on Dec. 20 brings down the curtain on an unprecedented era of political activism by the Supreme Court—unparalleled by ruthless political conflict to intervene to avert the plunge of the country into chaos in the wake of the ouster of President Joseph Estrada by "people power" in 2001.

Davide has presided over the court for seven years, highlighted by the first impeachment trial of a Philippine president, which he conducted with impeccable impartiality. And yet, the aftermath of the trial [by the suppressed envelope of evidence] drew the court into a highly contentious issue involving the legitimacy of the accession to the presidency by Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

The selection of the next Chief Justice is taking place against the background of the legacy of the Davide Court which he himself defined as "an activist court." Former Senate President Jovito Salonga has a

SEE PAGE A-10

ANALYSIS

MILF, gov't forces rescue 2 kidnap victims

By Luige A. del Puerto

IN A RARE JOINT OPERATION, MILITIA guerrillas and government forces rescued two kidnapped students yesterday in Pagayo town, Lanao del Sur.

"The negotiations would surely go on," the families who rejected couple Felipe and Helen Lacsamana were heard saying when they learned that Sultan Dimalo Mimbantas Liberation Front (MILF) fighters had rescued them, according to Mamer Brig. Gen. Ben Jamin Dolorfino.

Before daybreak, the families, who had demanded an unspecified ransom, abandoned the couple in a bus in Barangay Pantar. Civilians guided the couple to the MILF camp's Commander Bulay, who then escorted them over to the Mimbantas.

"They (couple) were OK. They were not wounded. But a single shot was fired," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told the Inquirer on the phone.

The MILF has been waging a bloody war for Moro self-rule in Mindanao for decades. It has been holding Malaysian-brokered peace talks with the government and forged a cease

PAGE A-10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2005
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Despite turmoil, economic growth seen

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO and the opposition continues to simmer but the economy is starting to show signs of growth contrary to fears it would be paralyzed by politics.

While gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the three months to September was a disappointing 4.7 percent, economists expect fourth quarter growth to come in at almost 5 percent.

The huge influx of remittances from the eight million Filipinos working abroad has lifted the economy and the stabilization of oil prices after recent record highs would also boost growth, analysts said.

"We feel the economy is performing better than expected even overall, setting the type of difficulties we are experiencing," said Mike Tidman, president of the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines.

He expects GDP growth to be "a little bit lower" than 5 percent—a good showing, "given the difficulties we have been through."

"After expanding 4.6 percent in the first three quarters, the economy should be able to post an above-5 percent performance in the fourth quarter, primarily due to the strong influx of remittances," said economist Julius Pawasauskas of DBS Bank in Singapore.

Christmas holidays

Overseas remittances usually surge in the fourth quarter as Filipinos send money home for the Christmas holidays and this might enable the economy to end 2005 with 4.6 percent growth, Pawasauskas said.

"The weaker-than-forecast third quarter growth, (of 4.1 percent) places the full-year real GDP outcome on track to reach 4.6 percent," said JP Morgan economist Ms Bing Dagis in a research paper.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Augusto Santos conceded that the 4.7 percent growth in the third quarter was "disappointing" but likely the Philippines would hit its 5.2 percent growth target for 2005 but he was still confident it could approach the last figure.

He blamed the slowdown in the third quarter on the poor performance in agriculture, the record oil prices and the political turmoil stemming from the opposition's efforts to impeach Ms Arroyo on charges she cheated to win the 2004 elections.

"The political uncertainty brought about by the impeachment case and the volatility of oil prices weighed on the economy," Santos said.

Political uncertainty

Since June, the country's economic team has been united in accusation that Ms Arroyo cheated her way in victory.

The President has denied the charges and her allies in Congress succeeded in quashing an impeachment motion in September but dissent and protests in the government had bogged down in the partisan struggle.

The President said the growth rate has showed she has successfully contained the economy from the political environment but her opposition critics said millions of poor and (many Filipinos were still unemployed or underemployed.

"The fact is, that up to today, there are questions being raised on the ability of government to get its act together (and) legislative issues that are still enacted (on)," Salazar said.

But business people have learned to "ignore the political situation and continue with their operations," he said.

Mr Arroyo can boast of some victories early in the implementation on June 1 of the long-delayed expanded value-added tax (VAT), the cornerstone of the government's efforts to boost revenues and restore a fiscal order.

The bill hopefully boosts the budget from the budgetary deficit, leading possibly to an upgrade in the country's credit ratings and allowing the government to spend more on infrastructure instead of debt servicing.

Penchant for spending

Santos was confident the economy would rebound in the fourth quarter based on recent positive indicators such as tourist arrivals, greater consumption, rising sales of motor vehicles and appliances, and improving trade data as well as the recent strong performance of the stock market.

Wajhee Hsiung, an economist at the University of Asia and the Pacific, agreed, saying that "given our penchant for spending in the Christmas season and renewed confidence in the (lower) oil prices, there is still room even some significant increase" in growth.

For next year, Santos said the Arroyo administration is also counting on Japan and the United States, the two main trading partners of the Philippines, would also lift the economy.

While growth in 2006 will likely be on the same level as 2005, analysts hope the country will finally shift its focus to attention on the economy.

"The political scenario has already been put in the background. The focus will now be on the economic reforms, fiscal reforms," said Ben Bedinge of Accord Capital Equities Inc. AFP

Palace: GMA bent on Cha-cha

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY insisted President Macapagal-Arroyo was determined to have the 1987 Constitution amended, contrary to claims by some senators that she only agreed on it in July when her administration was on the verge of collapse after key members of her Cabinet quit and sought her own resignation.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye reminded the senators that Ms Arroyo was the only presidential candidate in 2004 to include Charter change as part of her campaign platform.

"Whoever appears to be flashing those who are now claiming that the proposed shift is only being done for political expediency," Bunye said in his weekly "The Three Peaks of the Palace" column.

Bunye, however, declined to comment on the senators' claims that the Arroyo would only support Charter change if she remained President until the end of her term in 2010 and with no diminution of her powers.

In July, when she faced a crisis of legitimacy and was in danger of being toppled, President Arroyo was given crucial support by former President Fidel Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia, who offered the Charter change compromise as a "grand bargain."

In his column, Bunye stressed that the Palace call for Congress to support the Charter change initiative, which is being kept alive by a 49-member consultative commission gathering Charter change proposals for submission to lawmakers after end of this month.

"We call upon our leaders to seize the moment and waste no time to address the weaknesses of a post-*sentil* political system," Bunye said.

He said political reforms were important components of the road map of the Arroyo administration.

"Charter change now is a great opportunity to ensure a better future," he said.

The Palace, he also said, was glad the Senate was now more open to Charter change even though the "opposition moved method" of committee assembly.

He was referring to Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel's earlier statement that he was now amenable to have the Constitution amended through a constituent assembly instead of a constitutional convention.

But Pimentel yesterday confirmed administration lawmakers against holding a people's initiative to amend the Constitution, saying this might not be legally-viable.

The people's initiative was proposed by De Venecia as an option in the event the Senate stood down the House resolution seeking to vote both chambers into a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution.

Pimentel advised De Venecia to check whether there was an "appropriate" law that governs the holding of such an initiative before considering it as a "fallback position" if everything else failed. With TJ Burgonio

'STOP THE KILLINGS'

Kabayan party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano (left) and other members of the militant workers' group rally outside the Department of Justice in Manila yesterday to protest the killings of their colleagues allegedly committed this year in violation of human rights, at video at the Barangay Ugong ng Bayan in Quezon City yesterday. The affair was held amid the release of a report scoring the Arroyo administration for its dismal human rights record. (See story on Page A7)

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New leader of bishops hoping for good press

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE CATHOLIC Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) hopes he doesn't get the same bad press that his predecessor supposedly did.

On his first day on the job, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo sent a text message to Malolos Bishop Jose Oliveros asking him for support.

"He texted me on the very first day he assumed office precisely about his predecessor," Oliveros said yesterday during an interview over Church-run Radio Veritas.

The (Lagdameo) said he was hoping he would get the people's support and not criticisms like those leveled against Archbishop Fernando Capalla, "he said" Filipino.

Oliveros wished his former professor in the seminary "luck in your relationship with the press."

Lagdameo officially replaced Capalla as CBCP president on Nov. 7 amid expressions of a Church leadership less ambivalent when it came to socio-political issues.

The toughest Capalla's non-stop term, he had been criticized for allegedly failing to make the CBCP more relevant, especially in the face of political and economic turmoil.

Oliveros seized the media, particularly the bayanes, for its alleged baseless attacks on Capalla's leadership of the CBCP, as well as some fellow leaders of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

"Their facts are not accurate and their reporting is not balanced," Oliveros complained.

"A reporter is not true to his calling if instead of heralding the truth, he becomes the bringer of the half-truth or untruth," he said.

Aside from making sweeping statements about the media, Oliveros didn't clarify specific issues, like the bayanes report on a number of bishops who received hefty cash donations from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Among them were Cebu Archbishop-Emeritus Cardinal Vidal, San Fernando Diocesan and Archbishop Paciencia Antonio and Capalla.

One priest sympathetic to the media said many bishops were fuming over the report.

They were all the more angered by bayanes columnist Conrado de Quiros' criticism of Capalla and another report that President Macapagal-Arroyo had donated P1 million in an alleged effort to endear herself to Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales.

Another has some lonely kept himself away from politics.

Late last week, a text message circulated among bishops calling for a boycott of the bayanes.

"I stopped my subscription of the bayanes," Oliveros said yesterday.

Pinoy is Rome parish priest

THE VATICAN HAS TAPPED A FILIPINO TO help shepherd its flock in Rome.

Fr. Jose Manquiz Macario is the first Filipino—and Asian—to be named a parish priest in the Diocese of Rome.

As the new head of Rome's Diocese Fr. Santa Lucia del Gonfalone (parish), the 49-year-old Bicolano will work directly under Pope Benedict XVI, who is also the Bishop of Rome.

Macario was officially installed on June 4 before a crowd of some 1,500, including well-wishers from neighboring parishes.

The warm welcome reminded the priest of the parish of Malinao, Albay, where he served as a phone interview from Rome.

"The appointment is both a great privilege and a great responsibility," Macario said.

Judging from his accent, he seemed more comfortable only Italian than the French, Spanish, English and Filipino languages he also speaks.

Originally from Daraga, Albay, Macario first went to Rome as a student in 1980. He graduated from the Italian community and vice-rector, especially after he was ordained there in 1992.

Macario, who spent 13 years in the Rome parish prior to his appointment, faces the tough task of injecting life back into a flock seemingly lost in a steady stream of "tourists."

There is a natural decline in vocations made by Pope Benedict during his homilies at Christmas, Macario said.

Macario said he observed that many of his parishioners were practicing what he called "homosexuals" Christianity.

"They expect God to do things based on what they like. They do things without regard for the universal truth," he said.

Macario said the best way to deal with this attitude was for priests to be more open to the people.

He said he plans to show up at his parishioners' doorsteps to prove to them that the Church doesn't discriminate the faithful nor locked church doors. Christian V. Esguerra

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NDF to GMA: War or peace?

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—IT'S EITHER ALL-out war or peace talks.

The communist-led National Democratic Front said these were the only options left for the Arroyo administration in the wake of the intensified attacks being waged by New People's Army rebels in various parts of the country.

Luis Jalandoni, chair of the NDF peace panel, however, expects the government to continue with its hard-line militarist solution to insurgency and refuse to comply with its obligations under previous peace agreements and reject proposals to resume formal peace talks.

Jalandoni told the INQUIRER in response to an e-mailed query that it was also possible that, finding itself in an increasingly desperate and isolated position, the Arroyo administration would decide to start complying with its obligations and move toward resuming the formal talks.

Jalandoni stressed the revolutionary movement "is prepared for either way the Arroyo regime will decide."

From the People's War Bulletin index posted on the CPP-NPA website, the communist guerrillas claimed to have staged, from Sept. 20 to Nov. 21, a total of 68 ambuscades, tactical offensives and harassment of government forces in different parts of the country, killing many soldiers and carting away high-powered weapons and ammunition.

Jalandoni admitted the central committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines, in a directive in September, had ordered the NPA rebels to intensify nationwide tactical offensives against military, police and paramilitary forces.

He said the intensified NPA attacks were aimed "to isolate the Arroyo regime further and to embarrass the military and police with their losses."

Jalandoni predicted the continuous attacks by communist guerrillas would gradually advance the revolution from its present strategic defensive to a strategic stalemate stage and finally to a strategic offensive stage.

"That is the way for the people to gain political power. The offensives are now being stepped up because the oppressive and exploitative ruling system is in severe crisis, is very weak and is ripe for the offensives," Jalandoni said.

The NDF, the political arm of the CPP, suspended the Norwegian-brokered talks with the government last year, saying the government had done little to remove it from terror blacklists.

Indons' cutting of JI ties said to be a ploy

A RANKING INTELLIGENCE OFficial said yesterday reports that two top Jemaah Islamiyah operatives had cut their ties to the Indonesian-based terror group could just be a ploy to "soften" the efforts by both the Indonesian and Philippine governments to go after them.

"What we see is that they are trying to ease pressure on Dulmatin and Umar Patek, who are on the run," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Dulmatin, a bomb expert, and Patek are suspects in the 2002 Bali, Indonesia, resort bombings that killed more than 200 people. They are also believed to be behind several bombings in Mindanao. The United States placed a total $11-million bounty on their heads.

"They're only saying that these two have cut ties to cushion the impact or to soften our efforts to get them," said the official who is familiar with the workings of the JI.

US-trained Filipino soldiers are tracking Dulmatin and Patek in central Mindanao although reports indicated they had slipped out of the area.

Captured Indonesian militant Abdullah Sunata had told Indonesian authorities that Dulmatin and Patek confided to him two years ago that they had cut their ties with JI because of the intense manhunt for them by Indonesian authorities for their participation in the Bali blasts, The Associated Press reported.

They fled separately to Mindanao early that year, the AP said, quoting a report on Sunata's interrogation.

Luige A. del Puerto

COA-Bicol probes fund recipients

LEGAZPI CITY—THE COMMISSION ON AUDIT in Bicol is investigating at least five of the 14 reported recipients of the controversial P728-million fertilizer fund that allegedly was used to bankroll President Macapagal-Arroyo's election campaign last year.

COA chief legal officer Francisco Velasco said the agency had begun investigating the alleged anomaly in Bicol in October.

Velasco said initial reports from COA field auditors identified at least five recipients of the fund in the region. The money was supposed to go toward the purchase of fertilizer and other farm inputs under President Arroyo's Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) program but allegedly ended up in the pockets of politicians allied with her as well as with her election campaign.

Velasco, however, declined to reveal the names of the five recipients so as not to jeopardize the COA investigation.

"But rest assured we're doing all the paper and people trailing to ferret out the truth at the soonest possible time, especially now that they're all identified," he said.

The INQUIRER was able to obtain a copy of the list of proponents and recipients of the fund in Southern Luzon from the Office of the Senate President.

In the Bicol region alone, there were 14 fund recipients—seven congressmen, six governors and one mayor.

The congressmen on the list included Carlos Imperial (2nd dist., Albay), Joey Salceda (3rd dist., Albay), Renato Unico Jr. (lone dist., Camarines Norte), Felix Alfelor (4th dist., Camarines Sur), Jose Solis (2nd dist., Sorsogon), Emilio Espinosa (2nd dist., Masbate) and the late Fausto Seachon (3rd dist., Masbate).

The governors listed were Jesus Typoco Jr. of Camarines Norte, Leandro Verceles Jr. of Catanduanes, Antonio Kho of Masbate, Raul Lee of Sorsogon, former Gov. Al Francis Bichara of Albay and former Gov. Luis Villafuerte of Camarines Sur.

Emiliana Kare of Malinao, Albay, was the only mayor on the list. ***Gil Francis Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

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(Diliman, Quezon City)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
NPC-LIWAG 2005-029

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1. The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NPC), through its duly authorized Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), intends to apply the proceeds of the Loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) under the Philippine Environment Project (PEP) to cover the cost of the following Project: Computer Leasing (Workstation Computer) Hauling Services/O&M of HPC Tupkuan #1. The Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid is open to all interested contractors, whether local or foreign, duly licensed by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and legally qualified to do business in the Philippines.

2. NPC now invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and to submit bids for the Project. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

3. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of [illegible] from the address below and upon submission of a letter of intent to bid. It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of NPC, provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

4. Prospective bidders must submit their duly accomplished Eligibility Documents and Bids in accordance with the Bidding Documents on or before [illegible] at the address below. Late bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below. Bids must be delivered to the address below and must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in the Bidding Documents.

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'Lion of Sea' retires

Story continues on page A6

Garcia's restriction on charges of unaccounted wealth and allegations of corruption against other generals, or by generals rules for almost their age so they could stay in the service longer.

"How can he be a bad soldier, when he's dashing from his shelf?" joked a member of a commercial dinner on Friday for Vice Adm. Romeo H. de Leon, flag officer in command (FOIC) of the Philippine Navy.

But golfer Ocampo he may be, he's an good a man as they get in the officer corps, colleagues say. So good, they add, that he's retiring earlier than he should, to ensure he leaves the Navy's command "in good hands" by deepening the bench of candidates for his successor, from three to five.

Former Philippine Navy FOIC Vice Adm. Edmundo Ma. Santos says De Leon's gesture of leaving early to give President Macapagal-Arroyo a wider choice "is laudable."

"It is the first time it has happened in Philippine Navy history," Santos says.

De Leon is 55, a year shy of the mandatory retirement age.

He says four hits, but look at him like a hero. One of them, Capt. Alexander Pama, enlisted from a Panuch unit to define a hero. "One who does something when others don't."

Vice Admiral suffers currently assigned to war zone areas in Mindanao against, citing instances when De Leon moved with alacrity while nursing, "Datum the impulses."

Sea Hawk

Departing is the Navy's task to protect the largest shoreline in the world. The gravity of the situation was brought home in 2000 and 2001 when bishop groups on-sea at Malaysia's Sipadan Resort and Ibo Pulitan Resort in Palawan, asking for ransoms and Filipinos as hostages.

The Navy battled back to success. Isolated Louis 1995, when De Leon commanded and commanded Task Group Sea Hawk. Their mission: to interdict international pirates hijacking cargo vessels between the Sea of Sulu through Mindanao and the Davao coast.

Six ships, an aircraft and two SEAL teams kept the pirates away. They have not returned, and kidnappers have not hit any more vessels since Naval Task Group Stingray, an offshoot of Sea Hawk, was formed in 2002.

Pursuing enemies and children

The Sabah-na" equivalent of "dance the impaled" was incarcerated in Basilan, evoking the Mindanao Sea in the dead of night as Stingray commandos came upon a wooden hut packed with Filipino Muslim refugees—170, in a 36-capacity boat flowing Sabah.

The Malaysians had been shooting undocumented men, women and children in jail.

Then Commander De Leon, as chief of Naval Forces South, swung into action. Though each round-trip voyage from Zamboanga to Sandakan was a million pesos in fuel, which the Navy could ill afford, off ships pulled them up and headed down home.

Securing the Malampaya Deep Water Gas to Power Project, is just peculiar by pinkie-sweet, a natural area of 15 Stoll-to Palawan, in gas pipelines current 504 km all the way to Batangas.

Task Force Malampaya includes the mine and the Navy, and is commanded by the Navy Malampaya is one of the largest natural gas projects in the world.

The killings of Abu Sabaya, the swaggering spokesperson of the Abu Sayyaf group, is a star in De Leon's crown. It took months of planning, intelligence work and coordination between the armed forces and police officials.

The story of "The Lion of the Sea," as he may like to refer to De Leon, is not quite of university. Ironically, his wealthy grandfather named Manio of not estate in the Manio Condominium area. In the 1960s, when football fans gambled away tracts of land, [illegible] De Leon name Christopher and actual Pinky set relational last everything.

Dynamic, retract fights in Iraq, where the Dr. knows those of which the land times name, off-leaves on a shoreline hop and from wonder, more how the young boy's days years.

His mothers was a seamstress, and when he was a boy, she made [illegible] time installment had to be paid and a seamstress's dress realized, she would tell him to help her hem in skirts.

PMA days

Senior days, he starred in school of no losses to body-bind books and even a few poses.

At the Philippine Military Academy he and former AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu were classmates, teammates and roommates. Present AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga was also a classmate.

No longer a drinking class, he sips Coke with his once in their drinking sessions, to listen to their troubles and their laughter. "It gives me a better understanding of human nature," he says.

Small wonder one of the "nicknames" broke away from the microphones, holding back for tears.

On Saturday, De Leon boarded the BRP Pangasinan, one of a grandship he has commanded, and delivered several Navy ships lined up on the bay as they would wonder their chief's final salute.

Then, he sailed on to daughter Pinky's house outside Subic bay and embraced his grandchildren.

In his younger days, he chose to go to France, at the Ecole de Guerre in Paris. For his first schooling, instead of to the limited house.

"You can't speak French," his superiors discouraged him. "I'll learn," he said.

He ripped all the lectures, translated everything every evening, and learned the language in three months. His two French awards, both from President Jacques Chirac, include the French Legion of Honor.

US doctors note . . .

Story continues on page A6

Honey advertising is on-somers, ending more than $600 million in 2004, has made Viagra and its newer competitors, Cialis and Levitra, among the best-known drug brands. Their combined global sales reached about $2.5 billion last year.

But the number of new prescriptions for the drugs has fallen steadily this year. Doctors wrote about 30 percent fewer new prescriptions in October than they did in October of 2004.

Some of the decline is a result of reports, disputed by some specialists, that linked the drugs to a rare form of blindness, according to urologists who specialize in treating impotence.

But those doctors say a more fundamental factor is also hurting sales: Many impotent men have chosen not to take the drugs, even though they work about 70 percent of the time and have relatively few side effects.

In some cases, doctors do not use the drugs because they have grown used to sexless relationships, because their spouses are physically unable to have sex, or because they are no longer interested in intercourse.

In added international use of the drugs by younger men also seems to have peaked, urologists say, for men men under 40, the drugs made up a major difference in the quality of intercourse, says Dr. Michel A. Perelman, a noted medicine specialist in Manhattan.

As many as half of men over 40 have at least mild or occasional impotence, but Pfizer estimates that only about 35 percent of those men get prescriptions for Viagra, Cialis or Levitra in a given year.

Ad campaigns

In the hopes of increasing that figure, Pfizer is about to begin two major new ad campaigns—one for Viagra and a more general one about erectile dysfunction, the company's term for impotence.

Lilly began its newest enormous ad blitz before Pfizer began selling it in May 1998. Wholesale sales topped $1 billion in 1999, and some Wall Street analysts predicted that Viagra sales could reach $4.5 billion by 2000. But the numbers soon appear to have not high.

In the United States, the biggest market for the drugs, doctors say the impotence drugs about 17 million times a year, to fewer than 5 million men.

Typically new drugs expand users, all sales by a class of medicines, so gradually if they are heavily advertised. That presumption for impotence drugs increasingly about 10 percent in 2004, despite the addition of Cialis and Levitra.

This year, Pfizer sharply cut back on ads for Viagra, after complaints from the Food and Drug Administration that the ads improperly failed to disclose the drug's side effects.

Now prescriptions for the drug plunged almost 20 percent in October compared to the same month a year ago. Cialis prescriptions are growing, but not enough to make up the difference, while Levitra's market share remains tiny. The New York Times News Service

Corrections

IN YOUR DREAMS notes, the caption of a photo on Page A8 misstated the name of the chair of the Philippine Sports Commission. The PSC chair is not Ricardo Sumilang—not Jimenez.

IN THE SEC: 3 issue, a headline in the library section on Page A14—"Rebels' son is family court"—should have read—"Rebellion issue is family court."

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Ray Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PCC Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati Ave., Makati City, fax No. 897-47-53, Ph. e-mail [illegible]

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Letitia Elvia, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.net or call her No. 897-47-53, Ph. Ans. Readers telephone the phone number [illegible] and FAX.

MILF, gov't forces ...

(From page A1)

with the military two years ago, considerably ending years of deadly clashes.

The MILF and the government had agreed to help each other in the pursuit of criminals in areas where the MILF exerts strong influence.

Abducted in Marawi

The couple, who both teach at the Lanao National College of Arts and Trade in Marawi City, were abducted by two armed men as they left the campus on Friday afternoon. They were brought to Piagapo town.

Word of the abduction flew fast as soldiers under Colonel Ino began pursuing the bandits.

The MILF in the area learned of the abduction and mobilized some 1,000 men to flush the bandits, according to Kabalu.

The military said two MILF bases were involved in one of the biggest anti-crime operations of the rebel group this year.

Blocking force

By nightfall, some 1,000 rebels had the bandits cornered in Madalum and policemen acted as blocking forces to town, MILF and government officials said.

"The negros of the town told us the bandits had sent surrender feelers, but we did not push through with the negotiations because it was night time already," Dalondon said on the phone.

Quoting Felipe Lacambra, the Marawi official said the bandits would examine radio dispatches among MILF men who were pursuing them.

"They knew they were cornered. Knowing that, they lost hope and panicked. They said, 'Pinoy ayaw sa mga inapektahan nito (The inapektahan would surely get us),'" Dalondon said.

Taking advantage of the sense of confusion, the bandits escaped and left the couple unharmed.

Sight to behold

The turnover of the couple on a highway in Piagapo was a "sight to behold," Dalondon said. "There were MILF rebels, government soldiers and policemen, and we were not fighting," he said.

"This shows our sincere commitment to help the government in going after criminals," Kabalu said.

Close relations between the police and military are now found, and the MILF, on the other side, share through the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group. The body was set up to good the resources of the government, and the rebel group not only in combating criminality but also in eradicating internal violence.

The Lanaoans were later brought to the International Monitoring Team office in Upper City where they were received with cheers and hugs.

With a report from AP

GMA appoints Mayuga Navy chief

By Luige A. del Puerto

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has appointed Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga the new chief of the Philippine Navy, a Navy spokesperson said yesterday.

"The President signed [the appointment papers] this afternoon," Capt. Geronimo Maldabacao said the day before. "The turnover shall be at 2 p.m. Monday at the Navy headquarters."

Previously, Mayuga was Inspector General of the Armed Forces. He is a member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1973.

"It's a pleasant surprise," Mayuga said. "I'll try to answer the basic capability of the Navy to conduct maritime security operations."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Christmas card sells for ₱840,000

LONDON—A 142-YEAR-OLD CHRISTMAS card, one of the first commercial cards produced for the season, sold at auction in England on Saturday for 8,000 pounds (P840,000; $15,000 euros; P840,000).

The hand-colored card, which shows a family celebrating around a table, is one of about 12 surviving from an original batch of 1,000 printed in 1843, auctioneers Henry Aldridge & Son said.

The cards were commissioned by London art dealer Henry Cole, who is generally recognized as the inventor of the commercial Christmas card.

The card was bought at the auction in Devizes in southern England by Cedric Brown, director and co-owner of "Progressive Greetings" magazine and general secretary of the Greeting Card Association.

Auctioneer Aldridge said he was "pleased with the price and that the card is staying in this country within the greetings card industry."

"The card was originally sent to a Miss Mary Hayward, a close friend of the poet Elizabeth Barrett, wife of poet Robert Browning.

"We don't know who sent it to Miss Hayward. We can only assume that they must have been of means as cards were a novelty at the time," said Aldridge.

John Calcott Horsley, a British painter, designed the card for Cole, who was the first director of London's Victoria and Albert Museum.

Cole printed 1,000 of the cards on a lithograph, since before having been hand-colored. They were sold from a shop in Old Bond Street, central London, for one shilling each (5 pence). 7 euro cents; $1.15; P4.31).

AP

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RP rights record poor—watchdog

By DJ Yap

THE COUNTRY'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD remained dismal for the better part of the year, a group monitoring violations said.

Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) said at a conference Friday that the first three quarters of 2005 were marked by increased cases of summary killings, torture, illegal arrest and arbitrary detention of people contrary to their rights.

With the worldwide celebration of International Human Rights Day on Dec. 10, TFDP came out with a situationer on the state of human rights in the Philippines.

Documented cases

At the conference held at the University of the Philippines, the group presented its report which concluded that "the Arroyo government has failed in its obligation to respect, protect and fulfill human rights."

From Jan. 1 to Sept. 30, TFDP documented the following cases of human rights violations throughout the country:

- Arrests and detention—21 cases, 55 victims;
- Torture—10 cases, 23 victims;
- Displacement—42 families;
- Military harassment—518 victims;
- Casualties of military operations—38 dead, 13 wounded;
- Loss of homes to illegal demolition—20,300 victims.

As of September, there remained 265 political prisoners and detainees in 59 detention centers all over the Philippines, according to TFDP.

At the forum, the group also presented a video documentary explaining the relevance of human rights and the need to safeguard them.

The group said the video is to be used in TFDP's advocacy and educational campaign for the protection of human rights.

"The celebration of human rights week calls on all of us to intensify the campaign to denounce the violation of human rights and educate the people regarding their rights," said Sr. Cres Lucero, SFIC, executive director of TFDP, in a statement.

Extrajudicial killings

Lucero took President Macapagal-Arroyo to task for the unabated extrajudicial killings of human rights advocates and activists.

"As (these) killings continue, so does the growing state repression of legitimate dissent," she said.

"The military and intelligence community have aggravated the situation by using red-baiting tactics and making public pronouncements tagging progressive organizations and terrorist forms," she said.

Killings of left-wing militants and other activists in recent years had led to calls for the government to curb the military and police, but up to as recently as last week a human rights activist was killed by an unknown assailant in Ilocos Sur.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 5, 2005
2nd Week of Advent

1st Reading: **Is 35:1-10**
Gospel: **Luke 5:17-26**

One day Jesus was teaching and many Pharisees and teachers of the Law had come from every part of Galilee and Judea and even from Jerusalem. They were sitting there while the power of the Lord was at work to heal the sick. Then some men brought a paralyzed man who lay on his mat. They tried to enter the house to place him before Jesus, but they couldn't find a way through the crowd. So they went up on the roof and, removing the tiles, they lowered him on his mat into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven." At once the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees began to wonder, "This man insults God! Who can forgive sins but only God?"

But Jesus knew their thoughts and asked them, "Why are you reacting like this? Which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven,' or: 'Get up and walk?' Now you shall know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." And Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." At once the man stood before them. He took up the mat he had been lying on and went home praising God.

Amazement seized the people and they praised God. They were filled with a holy fear and said, "What wonderful things we have seen today!"

Commentary

Amazement seizes the people. The works of God are about life, about friendship and serving one another in need, about faith in desperate times, about forgiveness and learning again to fear only God and no one else. God comes with courage, strength to stand up and transformation not only of human beings but the very ground we stand on. In the presence of our God everything matures, blooms and bursts forth with freshness and passion and grace. Does our presence in the world bring forth such peace and wholeness, such justice and grace? Make it so today!

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ganaza

No. 3 al-Qaida leader killed in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD—AN AL-QAIDA COMMANDER ranked the third most senior leader to Osama bin Laden's network was killed in a tribal region of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan, President Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday.

Abu Hamza Rabia, an Egyptian [illegible] with leading al-Qaida's international operations, was among five people killed in an explosion at a house where they were hiding in North Waziristan on Thursday.

Rabia, in his 30s, took over the number three spot, behind Bin Laden and his Egyptian deputy Ayman al-Zawahri, after the capture of Abu Faraj Al-Libi in Pakistan in May '05 and Pakistani security officials said.

Rabia was involved in plots to attack the United States and his death was a serious blow for al-Qaida, according to a US counterterrorism official in Washington.

"After Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahri, Rabia was the most senior al-Qaida official for international terrorist planning," the official said.

"Rabia served in the leadership group as chief of international operations planning. His international portfolio included planning attacks against the United States," the official said.

Rabia's death was confirmed by Musharraf on his arrival in Emirates on an official visit, although the Pakistani military has not found the body and are relying on satellite surveillance and intercepted communications between al-Qaeda members.

"We believe, 200 percent, I think he was killed the day before yesterday if his not wrong," Musharraf told reporters.

Pakistani intelligence sources said two of those killed with Rabia were also believed to be Arabs, while other two dead were been related to the extremist leadership there.

Rabia was involved in two attempts on Musharraf's life in December 2003 and security forces had been hunting him for some time, Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said.

Rabia was killed in Hoisori, a village near Mir Ali in the tribal agency just 20 km from Afghanistan where US forces are based.

Many al-Qaida members took refuge in Pakistan's semi-autonomous tribal belt after US-led forces ousted Afghanistan's Taliban in 2001. Reuters

PAMBANSANG PANGKOMISYAN SA PAGKAIN
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

November 15, 2005

ADVISORY NO. [illegible]

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SOURCE COUNTRIES	ALLOCATION (MT)
[illegible]	50,000
[illegible]	15,000
[illegible]	1,500
TOTAL	66,500

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FOR YOUR GUIDANCE.

(Sgd.) [illegible]
Administrator

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Description	Indicative Price (In Philippine Currency)	Date of Submission of Offers
1995 Suzuki Vitara - Plate No. DFC 908 white wagon, 4-cylinder gasoline engine, 5-speed manual transmission, complete with spare tire, tools and accessories	180,000	December 13, 2005
1995 Nissan Ivanvette - Plate No. DFC 159 red wide body, 4-cylinder gas engine, 5-speed manual, complete with spare tire, tools and accessories	130,000	December 13, 2005
1997 Nissan Sentra - Plate No. SUH 200 blue 4-door sedan, 4-cylinder gas engine, 5-speed transmission, complete with spare tire, tools and accessories	45,000	December 13, 2005
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Bird flu hits Ukraine for first time

KIEV, UKRAINE—UKRAINE HAS RECORDED its first bird flu outbreak, prompting the president to declare a state of emergency in four Crimean villages following the deaths of more than 1,600 chickens and geese.

Dead birds in the Black Sea peninsula tested positive for the H5 subtype, officials said Saturday. Bird flu had already been detected in neighboring Romania nearly two months ago, and Ukrainian officials is mobilized to try to stop this nation of 47 million that they were well prepared.

Ukrainians, meanwhile, began debating whether to stop buying poultry—the only moral many in this poor nation can afford.

"I don't see any reason for panic, the situation is under control," Agriculture Minister Oleksandr Baranovsky told reporters in Kiev after announcing a 3-km quarantine around the four villages.

Samples were sent to laboratories in Italy and Britain for further tests to determine whether the disease could be the deadly H5N1 strain, which is being monitored for fear it could mutate into a form that is easily transferable among humans. The results are expected by Thursday, Baranovsky said.

Worldwide attention is focused on the H5N1 strain, which has devastated poultry stocks in Asia and killed at least 89 people in the region since 2003.

Domestic fowl began dying in Ukraine's Crimea region on Oct. 18, but the deaths increased significantly last month, rising to 1,021. Positive test results for the H5 strain came back Saturday, Baranovsky said.

He attributed the bird flu to contact between migratory birds at the Crimea's Lake Sasyk and domestic fowl. The peninsula had been seen as an area of special concern for as that flies because it is a landing spot for many migratory birds.

Under the state-of-emergency ordered by President Viktor Yushchenko, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the quarantine, and experts will visit every home to inform residents to count flocks, kill birds—even if healthy—will be slaughtered, entering Sunday and their carcasses burned.

Residents will be compensated as much as 19 hryvnia (about $3) for each culled bird, Baranovsky said.

The state of emergency also sets up a larger 10-km zone that will be put under close monitoring. AP

Doctors cleared after refusing to inseminate lesbian

SAN DIEGO—A STATE APPELLATE COURT ruled that two fertility doctors had the right to refuse to artificially inseminate a lesbian on the grounds that it would have violated their religious beliefs.

The 4th District Court of Appeals ruling Friday reversed a lower court decision that had said Dr. Christine Brody and Dr. Douglas Nelson could not use religion as a defense against a lawsuit filed by Guadalupe Benitez.

Instead, the panel found that the doctors were within their rights because they based their decision on Benitez's unmarried status and that discrimination based on marital status is not prohibited by California law.

Benitez, 32, sued the doctors and their small practice in Vista in 2003, charging their actions violated California's antidiscrimination laws.

The doctors contended they denied treatment because Benitez and her registered domestic partner of 15 years were not married. Benitez's attorneys argued that she was denied because of her sexual orientation, not her marital status.

Benitez was eventually treated elsewhere and gave birth to a boy now 3 years old. AP

SPORTS

REPEAT
Jermain Taylor (right) lands a jolt on former champion Bernard Hopkins of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, during the final round of their rematch at the Thursday Ray Events Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, Dec. 3. Taylor, who previously beat Hopkins by split decision, won the rematch by unanimous decision. AFP

Grizzlies make it 5 straight

HOUSTON—CARON Buckner scored 24 points and Memphis hit a franchise-record 13 3-pointers en route to routing Houston, 98-75, for its fifth straight victory in the Second Basketball Association.

Memphis was 15-of-32 from 3-point range to break the team record of 11 set against Salt Lake City last January.

Houston's was 6-for-7 on 3-pointers and Bobby Jackson were 5-for-6, Jackson finished with a season-high 18 points.

San Ming Jeff Houston with 20 points.

In other games, it was Toronto 95, New Jersey 82; Detroit 93, Chicago 79; Dallas 97, Charlotte 88; San Antonio 106, Philadelphia 91; Milwaukee 104, Orlando 94; Denver 101, Atlanta 99 and the Los Angeles Clippers 110, Cleveland 98.

Richard Hamilton, Drew Jeremy Chris Bosh scored a season-high 29 points and Morris Peterson added 24 Saturday to lead the Toronto Raptors to their third win of the season and second road victory in two nights. AP

Bata gets crack at P10m pot

FILIPINO ESTEBAN "BATA" REYES DEFEATED countryman Marlon Manalo, 8-4, on Saturday (Sunday in Manila) to earn a crack at reigning champion Mike Sigel of the United States for the $1 million King of the Hill Showdown title in Orlando, Florida.

Reyes, who logged off from the 10th Cuetoto to compete here, will be eyeing the whopping $500,000 (about P10.0 million) cash kitty in the best-of-three races to fund the title King of the Hill.

Reyes struggled in the early going against Manalo but won five games in a row to top the round-robin series that also tested the challenges of Sigel.

Reyes is already assured of the runner-up prize of $100,000 (about P5.4 million).

As the final round began, even Francisco "Django" Bustamante had a chance to muddle up the race until a bad-to finish Mike "The Iceman" Sigel, 2-0, clinched the

"I'm happy to be playing Sigel tomorrow, said Reyes, who won three of four matches going to the final round. "My family and my countries will be happy if I win, too," he joked.

"I have wanted to play Sigel for a long time. He's been planned for a while," said Reyes.

Manalo, undefeated through the first three days of play until the last three rounds of action Saturday, fell to Bustamante. Buddy Francisco "Django" Bustamante in a hard-fought battle that included a semi-controversial last frame, 8-7.

Bustamante, who bounded Reyes his only loss of the day, and he hopes to see his friend Bata become the king tomorrow. Marlon Bernardino

SPORTSWATCH

Rodgon 3-cocker on today

The SAMSUNG-Hind eyesighting champions begin today at Rodgon Mega Complex when the "SAMSUNG Mr. Appliance Pro 3-Cock Derby" unfolds at 8 a.m. featuring 32 exciting fights. The list of participants includes former World Bantam Cup champion Eric Marcelo and Rey Rotoras, Jerry Junio, Allan Sarn, Pat Umpong Pinas, Greg Rosa, Abraham Bermejo, Noel Cleto of Sasmo, Mangpo Garo, Danny Lee, Jun Cayabo, Ronald Balgos, Gino Acuo, Pino Alberto Hernandez and Bernard Brothers. The four-day, sanctioned event by Rodgon owner Roby Ugan stakes P2 million in cash prizes and a brand new Mazda. The second batch of 80 entries are active this Wednesday. Cockers and boosters may still join on Saturday, at first straight fee cocks at the. TF For inquiries call 557-1, 837-1838 or 462-4833.

Three big derbies slated

THREE of the country's biggest cockfighting events next year have drawn the support of Thunderbird Power Feeds, namely the guaranteed indonesia derby have joined Cebu promoter Pidaw Salazar's promoting the P1 million Pre-Christmas 3-Cock Derby soon-to-going at the Regino Coliseum. Thunderbird's Cockfighting Promotions will again add glitter to the World Slasher Council Nationals Coliseum on Jan. 11. Third 21 hosted by Jorge "Steve" Guanzon in cooperation with the Pelaboan of Classmates Group. For derby inquiries, call the Dagupan office at 09-1-2434 or 011-2308. The P1 million Candaba International 7-Cock Derby 2006 hosted by Dito Tinio and promoted by Bo Bello Sportsmen, Inc. follows on Jan. 29 to 31. The Derby fee is P18,000. Completing the triumvirate derby is Pedigree Tanay Cockpit's 10th Anniversary 8-Cock Derby hosted by Rudy Ugan in cooperation with Thunderbird Nutrition, which offers a guaranteed prize of P4 million and a Toyota Innova to the fastest 64 champion Derby fee is P13,000. For inquiries, call 911-3516, 833-1638, 853-1803 or (0920) 960-9063.

Annan to fire top UN exec

UNITED NATIONS — UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has decided to fire the head of the UN election unit, who has become a cue to the world body for supervising polls in dangerous places like Afghanistan and Iraq, two UN officials said.

The removal of Carina Perelli, a 46-year old Uruguayan, sent her members of staff and management layers, the officials said on Saturday speaking on condition of anonymity. Annan was expected to make the announcement on Monday or Tuesday.

"A lot of people in the unit were talking about leaving because of the atmosphere she had created due to her behavior to subordinates," said one senior official. He said this month, director of the division's manager di-, tion, had been informed of the decision.

Salem Salkhan, the Ghibany spokesperson, declined comment.

Harassment

Perelli was accused last August by the UN personnel department of presiding over an office that created unusual harassment of staff. She was cleared, however, of allegations that she intimated UN funds be moved to Latin America.

The charges arose after she had been prime from President George W. Bush for her role in preparing technical recommendations. She was outspoken at some briefings and did not try to hide obstacles in pursuing her tasks.

"She is very self-confident and incredibly ambitious," said another UN official. "Professionally, she is a fantastic organizer and an incredible tough cookie but was bad with tact on this one."

Last December, Kofi Annan Perelli, the former UN undersecretary general for political affairs, had served on a search committee firm to oversee the election department after staff complaints.

Favoritism

The Swiss firm Hannen SARL, in a leaked 10-page report in August, cited poor personnel management and excessive knowledge of election procedures. But it said she had chosen favorites toward a small circle of employees and created an atmosphere of sexual jokes, unwelcome advances, and professional harassment.

"The work environment within the division is considered offensive by many of those interviewed and has contributed to diminished morale," the report said.

Perelli was out of UN professionals for nine years but the report said staff turnover had been high.

Perelli was quoted the decision, but in response to the allegations by the Swiss firm had been delivered before she helped organize Afghanistan's elections in September and Iraq's consultational referendum in October. She was also involved in preparations for Iraq's December elections. Reuters

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Howard retreats from anti-death vow as Aussie's remains are brought home

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER John Howard backed away from initiating a campaign to try to end the death penalty in Asia, as the family and lawyers of an Australian drug trafficker executed in Singapore arrived home with his body.

The plane carrying Nguyen Tuong Van's coffin landed in Melbourne early on Sunday morning, along with Nguyen's mother Kim and twin brother Khoa.

The 25-year old was hanged on Friday for carrying 400 g of heroin while in transit to Singapore three years ago.

His lawyer, Lex Lasry, told reporters in Singapore he would urge the Australian government to take the lead in campaigns for the abolishment of the death penalty in the region.

"We will ask the government to formulate a strong policy so Australia can take the lead, especially in the region, against the death penalty and in particular against the mandatory death penalty," Lasry said at Singapore's Changi Airport.

However, Howard said it was important to be realistic about what could be achieved.

"If anyone imagines a diplomatic offensive by Australia is going to change the attitude of China, or the attitude of Singapore or Malaysia or other countries in the region to capital punishment, then I think they are mistaken," he said on Australian Broadcasting Corp television.

"Let us practice what we believe in in Australia, let us argue that case for the benefit of Australians overseas, but let us keep some sense of proportion."

Nguyen's execution put a spotlight on Singapore's death penalty, which dictates mandatory execution for anyone over 18 convicted of carrying more than 15 grams (0.5 ounces) of heroin.

Lately condemned Singapore's use of the mandatory death penalty and called for the city-state to review its laws.

"Singapore is going to have to understand that a first world country cannot continue to hang people without giving them a chance to say why they should not be executed."

Nguyen, born in a refugee camp in Thailand, had said he was carrying drugs to help pay off his brother's debts from loan sharks.

Australian television networks created live to Changi prisons on Friday morning and also to an emotional church service in Melbourne where a bell tolled once for each of Nguyen's 25 years.

Australian Attorney-General Philip Ruddock described Nguyen's execution as an "unfortunate business" but several polls have shown that Australians have been divided over the execution.

Singapore leaders and activists are angered that Singapore, described by rights group Amnesty International as having one of the highest execution rates in the world relative to its population, will expand its narcotics laws.

"I am confidently say he will not be the last to be hanged," said opposition politician Steve Chia of a bomb held on him the by city-state's rights group Think Centre.

"Most Singaporeans are no caught up in making a decent living to care about one convicted trafficker in our society" said Chia, who is also a nominated member of parliament. Reuters

FURIOUS HONG KONG

Tens of thousands of people take part in a pro-democracy march in the streets of Hong Kong, Dec. 4, to demand the full democracy that was promised when Britain handed its crown jewel colony back to China eight years ago. AFP

Quake-prone Japan shaken by building scandal

KINUME, JAPAN—WHEN YOUNG COUPLES bought luxurious condominiums in this south-city suburb of Tokyo last year, they never thought the value of the biggest purchase in their lives would evaporate within months.

"At 35 years old now and bought the house with a 35 year loan," said a resident of Grand Siege Kinumaki Ouishi, one of a growing number of buildings whose data on quake resistance were falsified by a construction architect.

"My son will start going to school next year, and my wife and I are expecting another baby. This is more of a financial problem."

Japan—which endures 20 percent of the world's major earthquakes—has long prided itself on building a quake-proof infrastructure than the rest of the world would envy.

But since architect Hidetsugu Aneha confessed in November to having evaded the data on condominium and hotel buildings around Tokyo, more residents are facing up to lives more precarious than an earthquake itself.

The scandal, spreading nationwide, to each day revealing more buildings that would be at risk during an earthquake, increasing the number of people who may have to move out their homes to the scale of thousands.

At least 40 buildings were listed as of last week as possibly vulnerable due to the falsified data.

For the residents of 23-unit Grand Siege Kinumaki Suishi, the fear of possibly losing their homes while still carrying the loan is quite chilling.

The Kinumaki City office has told residents to move out the dangerous building by mid-December, the first such order issued since the scandal surfaced.

"The government, as well as media, seem to think we'll all be fine as long as we're out of the building," said the 35-year-old, who like other residents, declined to be named as he was not a chosen community representative.

"Any of us could go crazy thinking about double loans for the next 30 years, a secure unit, no problem then the risk of a major quake is still."

The prices of the condominium units in the upscale commuter town range from 26.6 million yen to 41.8 million yen (US$97,000 to $514,000) each.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Mitoya also said the government will make some 2,500 residences available for the unlikely suburban refugees when they are forced to move out in mid-December, and the government decided on a tax reduction measure for them.

But if they move, the residents would have to pay for moving and new rent or a housing loan on top of the loan for the condo. AFP

FRANCE'S FAIREST
Akiram'a Benavidez (center) is kissed by Miss France 2005 Cindy Fabre (left) and Jeo'n Wauters (right) after being crowned Miss France 2006 in Cannes, southeastern France, Dec. 3. Forty-five participants competed for the title. REUTERS

Tens of thousands protest global warming amid UN climate meet

MONTREAL—TENS OF THOUSANDS of people demonstrated Saturday in Montreal, host of the UN Climate Change Conference, to demand that governments worldwide take concrete measures against global warming.

Similar protests were expected in about 30 cities across the world, but organizers said the biggest crowd would be in Montreal, where the 189 conference started Monday.

"We are 40,000 today, and we are really proud of you," march leader Pierre Vollmer told the crowds. "We braved the cold to come, and it's important because the world is watching it."

Demonstrators want countries to negotiate a long-term plan to battle the battle against climate change.

They are also pressing Canada to lead serious against global warming and urging it to exceed its national targets in the Kyoto Protocol.

Some 10,000 delegates and ministers of environmental groups are meeting here for the UN Climate Change Conference ending Dec. 9.

The controversial Kyoto protocol, aiming to cut greenhouse gas emissions, became fully operational on Wednesday after the conference adopted the final rules.

The 34 signatory countries—which do not include the United States or Australia—passed the final regulatory measures by consensus.

So-called greenhouse gases, notably carbon dioxide, which is generated by burning of fossil fuels like gas, oil and coal, collect in the atmospheric layer that blocks radiant heat from escaping Earth into space.

Scientists worry that the resulting increase in temperature are melting polar ice caps and heating tropical seas, with unknown and possibly disastrous consequences for Earth's wealth, flora and fauna.

The environmental groups on Saturday presented the US consulate here with 400,000 signatures on a petition seeking US action on global warming, organizers said.

"We are here representing the people of the United States who want action to be taken," said Ted Glick, of the Climate Crisis Coalition.

"Sixty percent of the Americans people want action taken on global warming," he said.

He said the 400,000 came from 100 cities in the United States. AFP

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S. Korea cloning pioneer may soon return to work

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREA'S CLONING PIONEER Hwang Woo-suk, who has gone into hiding since apologizing last month for ethical breaches in his breakthrough research, may soon return to work, a news report said Sunday.

"We think he can come back to work like coming week in order to check on the research," team member Lee Byeong-cheon was quoted saying by the Sunday news agency. "We have kept persuading him to come to the research lab."

Hwang has been in seclusion, reportedly at a remote Buddhist temple, since Nov. 24, when he admitted having covered up the fact that members of his research team had donated their own eggs for his research effort.

Concerns and standards here egg donations by women here, especially junior staff who may be more vulnerable to pressure.

Hwang apologized and stepped down from all official posts, including the chairmanship of a new state-financed research body, the World Stem Cell Hub.

But the controversy has shown no sign of abating.

Hwang's humiliation has sparked public support for the scientist here, where more than 700 women pledged within two weeks to donate their eggs for his research.

Seoul-based broadcaster MBC, which aired a program critical of Hwang, has become the target of public protests, and some advertisers have withdrawn commercials.

MBC says it will not give in to protests and is preparing a follow-up program that would allegations that Hwang's epoch-making stem cell research itself may be faulty. AFP

Stem cell research by Hwang's group

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREAN PATHOLOGIST LEE Jo Hwang Woo-suk of Seoul National University are at the forefront of stem cell research.

In May, their study on using tissue from patients to grow stem cells garnered a promise that could one day provide human tissue and organs to cure terminal illnesses.

Hwang apologized on Dec. 2005 a ethical lapses in his work.

Two junior women researchers donated their eggs for the team's work, a practice which has been seen as an ethical violation because research associates could feel they were coerced into making such donations.

Following is some of Hwang's recent work:

• Therapeutic cloning—Hwang's team cloned the first human embryo for research and developed the first tailored embryonic stem cells.

Such advances could eventually lead to cures for debilitating and deadly diseases such as Parkinson's and severe spinal cord injury by taking skin from a patient to grow custom-made stem cells with that patient's specific genetic material.

Donated human eggs were hollowed out and skin cells from patients injected into it and then fused. The eggs began dividing and sometimes become embryos.

The process, published in the journal Science under this year, involves the complications of extracting eggs, fulfilling ethical promises Hwang cleaning to cure terminal illnesses.

• World stem cell bank—South Korea established the bank in October with the aim of keeping the country at the forefront in the field. Stem cells are stored at Seoul National University and made available to researchers and researchers.

Hwang resigned his chairmanship from the bank when he announced the ethical lapses in his laboratory.

• Human embryos—Hwang has said he is not intending to clone humans. The early 2004 study proved the area the rim most of therapeutic cloning. Hwang and his team removed the nuclear from a human egg and replaced it with the core of another cell taken from the female donor.

• Fighting mad cow disease—Hwang said in 2003 that his team created cows with high levels of a protein enzyme that makes them resistant to mad cow disease.

Cow's eggs were injected with somatic cells with a high level of cell-type structure, and cultivated them in surrogate cows. The animals are under a long-term study as researchers. Reuters

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Well done, Team RP!

EDITORIAL

WE CONGRATULATE THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION to the 23rd Southeast Asian Games for winning the biggest number of gold medals. Officially, an overall champion is not supposed to be named, but it has become a popular tradition to name one on the basis of the number of golds won.

The Philippine contingent's triumph comes like refreshing rain in a troubled nation thirsty for good news and positive developments. And even if only for a brief week, the nation forgot its troubles and stood united in cheering for its athletes. Not even the Thai accusation of cheating could shake our athletes' steadfast determination to win honors for our country. If anything, it even prodded them to try harder for the gold.

The Philippine contingent ingrained on its second-place finish at the 1991 SEA Games because it was better prepared this time. Despite the limited funding, the officials and coaches were able to train the athletes better. It helped that some corporate donors gave substantial assistance and several city governments hosted some events held outside Metro Manila.

The Filipino athletes also enjoyed the home court advantage. There is nothing like the cheers and applause of one's countrymen to push athletes to the limit. It also helped that events in which Filipinos are strong, like softball, baseball, tennis and other traditional sports, were included in the Games.

Accounting for many of the gold medals were about two score Filipino-Americans who had been exposed to strong competition in the United States and other countries.

As early as now, we should be preparing for the next SEA Games to show everybody that our victory this year was no fluke. In the meantime, let's celebrate the triumph of the Filipino fighting heart and spirit.

The Capalla ad

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

TEXT MESSAGES HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING SAYING that the Philippine Daily Inquirer was unfair to Archbishop Fernando Capalla of Davao. The text messages say that the "Inquirer refused to print an advertisement in the archbishop's defense." The ad would have answered a column of Conrado de Quiros (Nov. 23, 2001) criticizing Archbishop Capalla. Another paper ran the ad.

This is what happened. The Inquirer's account executive in the Inquirer's Makati office. The Makati AE in turn sent the ad to the legal department of the Inquirer. As a matter of policy, all legal-size advertorials need to pass through the legal department for it to check for libel. The legal department decided it should not run the ad because it could not understand it as faxed. What the lawyers saw was a picture of the archbishop's face behind shattered glass and they thought the image was damaging to him.

The Inquirer believes in freedom of the press and so gives its columnists "the widest latitude in the choice of topics within their areas of competence." Our columnists' freedom to comment on current issues is circumscribed only by the laws of the land, including the laws on libel and the law on inciting to sedition, as well as by the Inquirer.Net Code of Ethics and the Canons of Team for Journalism.

The views expressed by De Quiros in his column, like those of the other columnists, do not necessarily reflect those of the management and the editors of the Inquirer. This in turn is one of the Inquirer's defenses against the Church or members of it famously, such as Archbishop Capalla. The Church itself allows the expression of views, such as those of Fr. Robert Reyes, that do not reflect those of the hierarchy. Similarly, the Inquirer stands for the expression of all views, whether these are consistent with those of the management and the editors, or not.

We regret that we were not able to run the ad on the day the advertisement material published. There was no intention on our part to deny Archbishop Capalla and his friends and supporters the right to answer De Quiros' columns and express their opinions. Management, realizing that a mistake had been made, offered to run the same ad for free, but its offer was turned down. We invite the archbishop's friends and supporters to express their views in another ad or in a press statement and we will publish them.

ISAGANI PAMBOT
Publisher

'Legalized cheating' in sports competitions

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THIS IS A JOKE THAT'S NOW GOING THE rounds: Perhaps Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra jumped to the conclusion that there was cheating in the SEA Games because of his secretary. If Filipinos could cheat in such an important event as a presidential election, he must have thought, they could also cheat in sports. Especially since the person accused of having engineered the election cheating suddenly reappeared just before the start of the SEA Games. But the Thais should not point accusing fingers as the athletes are at their office.

Poor Filipinos. A gang of drunk conspirators meet an election and the whole nation is suspected of cheating in sports.

The Thais obviously are copkeys of the 4 x 10,000 race, where the Filipino runner clearly blocked the Thai. But the conclusion is not the Thais but that we cheated. It surprised me.

Thais that there was cheating. Thaksin was playing up to the home crowd when he was interviewed; he was giving the Thai team an alibi for not accumulating the most medals as it did in past SEA Games.

What we should do is to explore all the events where Filipinos and Thais competed and which the Filipinos won; identify the referees and judges in those sports, including their nationalities, and let the people decide for themselves if there was cheating.

Having said that, I don't have access to be to cheating in the current SEA Games. I would love like to say that there really is "cheating" in all international sports competitions, including the Olympics. I call it "legalized cheating" and it happens long before the actual competitions begin. It is "legalized cheating" because it is sanctioned by the rules. Nevertheless it deprives from the true spirit of the Olympics and other international competitions.

The "legalized cheating" takes many forms. One of them is citizenship in outstanding athletes who are foreigners. Before one SEA Games in the past, a city-state naturalized wholesale a group of athletes who are clearly all Asians. Other countries do that routinely, including rich countries that already have strong teams. The Philippines is guilty of that, too, and not only in the SEA Games and other international sports competitions but also in local leagues. The outcry over the Filipino-American basketball players, who were found not to be Filipinos and thus were expelled, is a case in point. While Chris Jackson, who is already a Filipino, is playing for a Philippine team and is still the subject of controversy. One of our congressmen is even planning to file a bill to legalize this premier love in the Philippines.

Now there is the prerogative given to host countries, allowing them to include sports in which they excel. If we haven't noticed, there are many Asian martial arts events in the SEA Games. They were included by host countries to native Games. Pakistan and India included games that only they played when they hosted the individual competitions. Years ago, they won all the medals for those sports. Technically, the Philippines could have included "jaks" and "patintero" to the current SEA Games, and such a move would have been legal.

The Olympics and other international sports competitions are supposed to be limited to amateur athletes. But basketball was opened to professional players when the American Senate team was formed for the Olympics. Other sporting events followed: professional players, many of them multi-millionaires, were allowed to compete in the Olympics. Why not? It happens when professional boxers are allowed to compete against amateurs?

Faster, higher, stronger" is the motto of the Olympics. But the Olympics now include events in "Tumaypot" which is disturbing, not a sport. The SEA Games now includes "billiards," a game that is being considered for inclusion in the Olympics later. Where are the "faster, higher and stronger" characteristics of these contests?

Why are these anomalies allowed? Because of the desire of competing nations, especially host countries, to include in the local medals. In this sense, Thaksin is right: some countries, including the Philippines, have made secretive losing gold medals a primary priority than upholding the sporting spirit. "I believe that the SEA Games should exist to help athletes hit their maximum level," I said, adding that "it should not be about winning gold medals."

Alas, the opposite seems to be true. In the reporting of the SEA Games, the lead is always how many gold medals the Philippines has won. Some reports, done in the Filipino language, even used a word that has a negative connotation: "pinagwagian" which means "flying high." But in Filipino, the term connotes an element of "boastfulness." "Sino ang nagwagian?" (Who won?) is what politicians say when they ask. If we haven't noticed, there are many Asian martial arts events in the SEA Games. They were included by host countries to native Games. Pakistan and India included games that only they played when they hosted the individual competitions. Years ago, they won all the medals for those sports. Technically, the Philippines could have included "jaks" and "patintero" to the current SEA Games, and such a move would have been legal.

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The Olympics and other international sports competitions are supposed to be limited to am-

Holier, and jollier

THERE'S THE RUB

Gustavo de Quiros

JESUS CHRIST DE LA CRUZ (SALAMAT PO, ANONG NOT naming you, Jesus, for his friends) did not send it to me. I got it through friends who thought (rightly) that I could share my day with a good laugh.

The message reads: "On Nov 23 PDI's Conrado de Quiros bombed Archbishop Fernando Capalla in deeply wounded fashion. He became so incensed that a columnist in the archbishop's defense, Ismael Ong Phil. Star is running it today (Dec. 1). Today I will STOP my subscription to the PDI. You might want to do the same."

Well, I do not know that my favorite newspaper is required to print every advertorial that comes its way, nobody, not even religious officials in this country wrote published. Why Do Ye Ons (if he is indeed the author of the text) should think that being accused their naturally contravenes a breach of press freedom, only he can say. My excuse (as my own, they are not the Inquirer's. I don't know why their ad didn't see

(Please see Publisher's Note in the Editorial column of this page.)

print. I can only guess that either my newspaper figured the ad had to fall in line like all the other ads, or it figured I am far too focused already I can do without the free advertisement.

But lately aside, let me declare the issue of putting them ad out in this space, if not in letter at least in spirit. It shows a picture of Capalla in all his archbishopric finery. The glass frame of the picture a broken right cheek where his face is, and a stone with a fragment of my column pasted on it next to her. Along side it are the words: "Holier than Thou?" and a quotation from Proverbs: "Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence soon subdues the mouth of the wicked."

Well, to begin with, what can I say about De la Cruz's declaration to stop subscribing to the Inquirer? If I were part of his flock, I'd be disturbed that he insists to deprive himself some source of things that could improve his mind, spare him his reading skills. The myth shall set you free, the ad shall not you only an anti-and a lig. I'm sensex the point. The "deeply insulted" he refers to comes from this paragraph in my column: "What we have in fact is a religion that has little to do with spirituality. You need only look at Archbishop Fernando Capalla's face to see it. That is why Filipinos having the least religious among all Asians (many) deeply spiritual, deeply troubled."

My point being that Filipino religiousness, presumably the highest in the world, carries with it a great deal of hypocrisy. It is shared more in ritual than in substance, as has been the case with the Church of Jesus rejects the DSWD as the prime source of homelessness or poverty? doesn't the CBCP soon saying the Church is there to uphold the poor of spirit and not the poor of body?

But I refer to and Servant in moral understanding. I agree by all the sanctions of heaven and earth: "Violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked." But surely there is no more telltale sign that a mouth is wicked than that it ignore hypocrisy, double standards and downright lies. Surely it is one thing to say as one hand "we make reasons for democracy" (as Estrada grandiosely)... a lot elsewhere from going off the sacred moral virtues our people hold in high esteem" and on the other "we do have our imperfections" (as Archbishop Capalla does) that we do not demand her FOMA's resignation." Surely it is one thing to say on one hand that to God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and on the other hand... and grandiosely... proclaims that the Church is above politics and politics below?

I'd go further and say evidence overwhelms a mouth that is kept shut in the face of hypocrisy, double standards and downright lies. At least Jesus had only to his wife, GMA has lied to the voters (and to Him) when he vowed on his inauguration that "I will not appoint anyone to fill up any and ego toward wins, women and song. GMA has suppressed all testimony on and evidence of her cheating. The second is not a little thorough corrupting of our elected values?

And one last jaw drop dare. The juxtaposition of the bony parts of Capalla in his royal finery and the small picture of me in my decade and a half old youthful glory does tend to cause the sublime question: "How dare this vanquish set just out, supersize on the saintly cloth?" Well, he give my Sunday-school catechism, but I'm almost thought I'd say and small, important and unimportant, malevolent and benign had nothing to do with positions and accoutrements but with hearts and minds. Not with the body but with the soul. I've always thought matter was the product of clarity of thought and not of knighthood. And I've always thought that Capalla was the product of purity of heart and not of habiteas of clothes. I've always thought character was the product of one's deeds and not one's attire.

I do recall too that the God that Christians worship, Catholic bishops and archbishops among them, of all their splendor and attire, was born stark naked to a smelly barn among the animals while misery saints kneeled outside—because he parents could not find refuge in any respectable home. As even we're celebrating soon. appearances can be very deceiving.

Better than these!
Ecclesiastes!

Desperately trying

THE MANAGERS OF CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION now seem to be assuming the burden of the barrier to possible recommendation of revision in charter. True, a mandate of the House of Representatives, by a slim margin, has approved a resolution calling for a joint session of the Senate and Senate to formulate changes in the current Constitution. The resolution apparently is not being received hospitably in the Senate.

Evidently because an inhospitable Senate reception was expected, the resolution had not yet reached the Senate as of Friday night, a move relished by those who oppose it. Even when it does reach the Senate, it very likely will face a paralyzing archival or definitive inertness. Those discouraging prospects are bringing out the "boos" to Lower House pariahs dwelling

Even as there is the thinking—coming from the Senate—that, in case the Senate refuses to dance, the House will go it alone. The thinking is that, when the Constitution speaks of three fourths of Congress, it means three fourths of the sum of the number of senators and representatives, even if the senators choose not to participate. The thinking is so simplistic but it does not explain how the House alone can propose the revision when that task has been given by the Constitution to a bicameral Congress. Thus, I cannot believe that responsible club congressmen could be behind what they are saying—unless they have been disenchanted by the leading non-lawyers in the House or in Malacañang.

Second is the threatened resurrection of Delia, whatever has been dead and buried. On the eve of the Senate adjourning, Delia was late for the change in leadership in the Supreme Court, it will be possible to revive the decision of 1997? It was Chief Justice Hilario Davide, after all, who penned the 1997 decision which prohibited the Commission on Elections from entertaining "initiatives and referendum" for amending the Constitution. Those who think that the decision will be reversed after Davide retires do injustice to the current justices.

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

The 1997 decision said that "the Comelec should be permanently enjoined from entertaining or taking cognizance of any petition for initiative on any amendment to the Constitution until sufficient law shall have been validly enacted to provide for the implementation of the system." In all fairness, the decision concluded, "the law, however, that the system of initiative is proper amendments to the Constitution should be subject to the limitation that it shall not diminish, limit and bind, energy and strength. Congress should not set up barriers in complying with the constitutional mandate to provide for the implementation of the rights of the people under that system."

It is now almost 30 years since the promulgation of the 1973 charter, but no law has been passed to give "flesh and blood, energy and strength" to the constitutional provision on initiative and referendum.

Let us suppose, however, that Congress laments its shortcomings (the unlikely fear of passing a new initiative and referendum law within the time on timeline. With such a law, even the purposes of those who wish to mobilize the electorate for achieving a variety is a parliamentary form of government, and a change to a federal system. In addition, they also want a unicameral legislature. These cannot be achieved by initiative and referendum. Initiative and referendum are meaningful for limited and very specific purposes. However, the question they pose for all amount to revision.

An amendment envisages an alteration of one or a few specific and arguable provisions. The granting of a final function of an amendment is to improve specific parts or to add new provisions deemed necessary to meet new conditions, or to correct specific parts that may have been defective. Revision of the whole package is so dangerous. It is to them, however, the guiding intention and plan contemplate a reexamination of the entire document on provisions of the document, which have a significant bearing for the determination of how and to what extent they should be altered. Such are the sections from presidential to primary, from unitary to federal, and from bicameral to unicameral.

The last time the Commission limited the scope of revisions and referendum to single amendments? The reason for this is clear enough. It would be practically impossible to conduct an overall revision of the Constitution through the action of the entire electoral population. Revision can be undertaken only by a deliberative body constructed for that purpose.

The introduction of the provision on amendments by initiative and referendum was an attempt to counterbalance the significance of allowing revision of the people's sovereignty. It was ratified in the February 1986 event. It is meant to be an application of the "democratic" concept embodied in Article II, Sect. 1. But it is interpreted with a clear understanding of the problems of revision.

This was clear in the minds of the commissioners who drafted the provision. As the Record of the Constitutional Commission says, "The commissioners members felt that this system of initiative should be limited to amendments to the Constitution and should not extend to the revision of the entire Constitution."

Should both the commission assembly and the initiative referendum fail, what would the Davide advocates think of next?

The relative unimportance of global warming

GLOBAL WARMING HAS BECOME TO BE PRESENTED CONSTANTLY IN OUR MEDIA. Many governments and most newspapers will tell us that dealing with global warming should be our first priority. Stopping a billion tons more in the United States, they argue, requires that we each even deeper cuts in the pollution that causes global warming.

But they are wrong about our priorities, and they are wrong about what we should do. As a result, we risk losing sight of tackling the world's most important problems first, as well as missing the best long-term approach to global warming.

It is not that global warming is not real. It is caused by CO2. The trouble is that today's best climate models show that immediate action will do little good. The Kyoto Protocol will no CO2 emissions from industrialized countries by 20 percent from 1990 levels by 2010. But even if everyone (including the United States) lived up to the protocol's rules, and much to those throughout the century, the protocol would reduce global warming by less than one-quarter of a degree centigrade.

Likewise, the economic models tell us that the cost would be substantial—at least $1.5 trillion a year. In comparison, the United Nations estimates that $40 billion annually would provide clean water and sanitation for all the world's major problems. It could surely clear drinking water, sanitation, basic health care and education for every single person in the world, now.

Clearly, global warming is mainly a problem developing countries, because they are poorer and therefore more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. However, even the UN's more pessimistic forecasts project that by 2100 the average person in developing countries will be richer than the average person in developed countries is now.

So, until action on global warming is basically a costly way of doing little for much richer future people, it is not the most sensible and responsive if this should, in fact, be our first priority.

Of course, in the lens of all wealth, we would be served to prioritize. We could do all good things.

COMMENTARY

Bjorn Lomborg

but would have enough resources to win the war against hunger and conflicts, stop communicable diseases, provide clean drinking water, broaden educational access and halt climate change. But we don't. So we have to ask the hard question: if we can't do all good things, what do first?

Some of the world's top economists—including four Nobel laureates—answered this question at the Copenhagen Consensus in 2004, listing all major problems and how much good we could do to prioritize. They found that HIV/AIDS, hunger, free trade and malaria were the world's top priorities. These were problems on which we could do the most good for our money.

On the other hand, the money spent almost on responses to climate change at the bottom of the world's priorities. Indeed, the panel called those measures—including the Kyoto Protocol—"bad projects" because they cost more than the good that they do.

The Copenhagen Consensus gives us great hope because it shows us that there are so many good things that we can do. For $27 billion, we could provide basic health care and education for every single person in the world, now. For $12 billion, we could cut malaria in half. For more than a billion a year, instead of helping rich people inefficiently far into the future, we can help millions today.

This does not mean losing sight of the need to tackle climate change. But the Kyoto approach focuses on costly cuts, which are expensive and do little good. Instead, we should let economic growth increase our wealth, so that we can afford more effective solutions. This would be much cheaper and ultimately much more effective in dealing with global warming. The United States and United Kingdom have begun to test the technique.

We should rule out short-term cuts immediately, which would cost more than benefits. We should first and foremost merely continue to abandon the status quo. Rather, they should suggest a treaty binding every nation to spend, say, 0.2 percent of GDP on research and development of non-carbon emitting energy technologies.

This approach would be far more cheaper than the Kyoto measures and many more times cheaper than a 50 percent. It would involve all nations (not just the rich countries, as with Kyoto), help get them, and perhaps developing nations being phased in. It would be each country based on its own future vision of energy needs, whether that means concentrating on renewable sources, nuclear energy, hydrogen, fuel cells or something new and more vacuum opportunities.

Such a massive global research effort would after have potentially huge innovation spin-offs in the long run. It would be far more likely to make a much greater impact on global warming than the no-only suggestion.

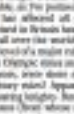
In a world with limited resources, where we struggle to solve just some of the challenges that we face, we have to think hard about how we are setting less ideal effects. We have a moral obligation to do the most good that we possibly can with what we spend, so we must focus our responses. That is why we must prioritize the world's problems.

In this matched, global warming doesn't seem clear. Rather than investing hundreds of billions of dollars in short term, ineffective cuts in CO2 emissions, we should be investing tens of billions of dollars in long-term research and development that will provide technologies with cheaper and cleaner energy.

Project Syndicate

Bjorn Lomborg is the co-director of Copenhagen Consensus, adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School and author of "Global Crisis, Global Solutions" and "The Skeptical Environmentalist."

Fight and win



THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

kind. Even the real meaning of sports. Players, trainers, coaches, managers and so on, chose in order to win the prizes, keep the purses, break records and make the country rise. It is some obvious enough that it doesn't need saying, but the sad fact is that, for people with different and the rational priority, you'd still see the risk that whenever two players are pitted against each other, there's a chance one of them will want to raise some sort of illegal advantage for himself.

What is remarkable is how a sport like boxing, thanks to the rules, has become equally symbols of transparent and unfair. (Enough in the process it destroys the brutal, and no longer a battle to the death. Even more remarkable, as the sport tries to how to invite spirit has allowed all other sports—and have rules devised in Britain have become so widely accepted all over the world. The rules for boxing are on the level of a major external achievement. After all, even if you have the right day of the Roman gladiators, even those sports leisure before the Queensbury rules? Apparently less, even if you include boxing knights. But with the rise of the modern nations there whose rules were the basis? Who have rubbed off on other favored sports by the gained into a sport adored by billions, the modern rules be boxing have given the world the "how-to-achieve."

That most ironic and primal of sports is well loved by Filipinos, and we have produced a long line of boxing heroes, from previous Fidel Villamor and Celestino Garcia, to pioneer's Paulo Rhodes and today's Manny Pacquiao and his brother. So our boxer produces a super heavyweight contender, but we have had no shortage of national champ with junior lightweights (like Dindo) and super featherweights (like Pacquiao). Just the other day, in the Southeast Asian Games, our trade and female boxers successfully pursued a grudge match against the Thais—they had off with seven gold medals in the 2000 games—garnering eight gold medals.

Now Lomarca of the Inquirer reported that the dutch Olympic middleweight Raymond Gubbels and Thailand's Olympic bronze medalist Somluc Kamsing, "was stopped after the first round," when boxing his patriot the ring with coins, plastic bottles and food in protest of the scoring, forcing the referee to stop the fight and declare Gubbels the winner." That, among other things, means the grudge match will move on to the next round in Bangkok, where the Thai Prime Minister (The best footballer of Thailand," as it was described in the Inquirer) would have promised the SEA Games will be "his." This can only mean, as legions of Filipino boxing aficionados will tell you, that our boxers are in for a rough boxing against, shall we say, no-boxed will.

Still, Thailand's determination to win at all costs aside, something has to be said for the Fil. spins love for boxing, which I think is a good thing compared to, say, the Filipino obsession with basketball. Due to a highly biased opinion, basketball seems to be the only sport we play. I grew up at a time when the king of the court was Robert Jaworski, and all I can remember are the allegations he performed winning over the free justice of the game. I haven't heard of such controversies in the PBA, but Teamits, and that operates highly of shows and their fans. But we still have to go for where is the great Filipino boxing movie or thrill and much people? Where is our "Million Dollar Baby" or "Cinderella Man," "Raging Bull" and "On The Waterfront"? The boxers are waiting at the door, in a corner, for the directors to march up the aisle. The headlines fade, but the celluloid lives on.

Commentary continues on page 12 under pseudonym, pfy/Wire

The 'land mines' of Rene Jarque

RETIRED PHILIPPINEARMY (PA) Capt. Jose Rene S. Jarque died at 46, in the prime of life, with so much yet to give to family and country. It is especially sad when the good die young.

Rene was a man, a Filipino soldier, ahead of his time, ironically he died amid battlefields not his own. I first met he married and worked on to shortening of time long ago—this just of being remembered less of being carried out.

Most people who knew Rene would for the many past remember him for his advocacy of "Re-banning the deadly forces." And rightly so. But Rene had another special contribution as a Filipino soldier that, perhaps, only few knew about. But which should be told for the sake of those who have an ear worth listening. This was his contribution to the APP—and consequently government—policy that eventually led into a ground-breaking American-assisted humanitarian but an anti-personnel land mines (Ottawa Treaty) in October 1997. This he signed in the city of Ottawa in December 1997 of the Nobel Peace Prize on the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), in recognition of the significance of its humanitarian ban and the process which led to it. Rene was part of that process.

On Feb. 7 1996, Rene, still with the military prepared a paper on "Landmines in the Philippines" for the Geneva Studies Conference, Office of Strategic and Special Studies, AFP. This paper was then carried by then Col. Alfonso Rapadas, chief of staff, 7th Infantry Division, 9th on the blessing of Espinosa on the military law and Effectiveness of Anti-Personnel Mines held on Feb. 13-15, 1996 in Geneva, Switzerland sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The most important resolution of this meeting was that the military survey of anti-personnel mines caused overnight the grave humanitarian, socio-economic and security problems in countries affected by these landmines. The conference then called on each country to report warnings sponsored by the ICRC.

It is now acknowledged that there unofficial or non-official "Track Two" meetings (as distinguished from official diplomatic "Track One" meetings) contributed to the maturation and political will of the Ottawa process leading to the treaty's signing. The process of research and "track two" meetings anchored on the close partnership between the colonial pro-ban governments (the Philippines included) led by Canada and an array of humanitarian and non-state actors NGOs and international organizations, like ICBL and ICRC. The governments "provided the political will" to "serve land of superpowers" to the unipolar world of our preeminent superpower.

Rene may have helped participate the Philippine position of this new model of diplomacy when his own superior/policy paper "Landmines in the Philippines" agreed favorably a "Negotiated Solution" to the problem. This paper was then passed by the non-governmental Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines (PCBL). Among the recommended Philippine positions then were: (1) an international ban on the use, production, stockpiling and sale, transfer or export of anti-personnel mines; (2) a ban on the use of AP mines during personnel on mines to apply also to mixed or armed conflicts; and (3) immediate initiation of MDO participation.

Two years later, all these have come to pass at both international and national levels. As early as December 1995, then President Ramos issued a policy statement which the student commander said that the AFP to observe and safety disposes without delay some. 2,000 disarmed mines still in its inventory. In January 1998, President Ramos issued his instructions of Ratification of the 1997 Ottawa Treaty. Even early in January 2000, the Senate issued its Resolution of Concurrence to the ratification of the Treaty. In February 2000, the Philippines has been a party to the treaty.

Rene at least lived to see these happen in his time—even if the same may not be said for the armed forces reformist which was his many parents. In more recent years, he would tell me how he remembered Fidel Ramos' order for the AFP to dispose of his inventory of mines. As an accountant himself, he was not insensitive by hatred by the Ottawa Treaty if they are used in antimissile deployed mode, i.e. if they are not victim activated. Claymore mines by their design can be used either way, command-detonated or victim-activated.

The Ottawa Treaty, in fact, allows countries that maintained landmines deployed very well. Fidel's reasons there remember 40K use of command-detonated improvised claymore mines as part of ambush tactics. This notwithstanding, the AFP, as he would also, has so far not reversed the policy against the use of deployed mines, even though it would still legally do so in command-detonated mode, say for perimeter defense of small detachments.

Sometimes, giving up the use of a certain weapon is meant to the form of higher moral ground. Perhaps, just as important as the collaborative achievements of a humanitarian ban and a treaty, Rene's contribution to the formation of a Filipino soldier (and later to soldier's resulting use in the "land reform" on the MOOD) can like us in the PCR. Later, he himself would birth of his advocacy MOD, the Action Against Tyranny and Corruption from (ACT NOW) and his own "Left wing." This is a precisely the kind of reaching out—from both sides now—that is needed for the peace, unification and reconciliation of this country.

I think Rene manages a coming effort at more genuine dialogue between Filipino soldiers, on one hand, and peace advocates, on the other. And there is something about a soldier (or ex-soldier) as a peacemaker (not unwittingly if I may say, makes for peacemaking more effective than usual. Maybe part of it is the trust enjoyed by his own comrades in arms, warriors being a kind of peacemaker in their own right.

One of the best possible tributes to Rene would be the emergence in our time of an honest, no goodness advocacy network on security sector reform, one of the few advocacy issues not yet really touched enough by Filipino NGOs. And our security sector reformers will definitely define some guidelines for the use of landmines in the future. Should the law prosecute Rene's articles and shares them with others as he did when he was alive, he had the gift of writing, and the ability with writing it that it can go a long way—as we know, even beyond death—to achieving good.

I believe we have not heard or read "the last word" from Rene. He would be the first to tell you so. Rene Jarque. Because there are bound to be other Renes Jarques.

Salimen M. Santos Jr. is coordinator of the Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines.

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Unaccountable

THERE'S A SAYING THAT FOR the blind it is meant to see chance is for those who have eyes but don't want to see.

This is the basic problem of Archbishop Leonardo Rosales. He wants is to ignore a crime and "leave the judgment to the Lord." (PDI, 11/26/05)

That is plain preposterous. The bishop is in fact telling us that we shouldn't use prosecute those who commit criminal acts and leave it to God and to His time. He should decide the whole judicial mix of the government if that is the case.

Bishop Rosales' idea of ignoring the evil will not save the community. Rather, it gives in the notion that we shouldn't be accountable to this world.

The Church should serve as the shepherd of the people. As the shepherd, it shouldn't let outside forces corrupt them. It should enlighten them instead so they can properly discern based on their conscience.

—JOAN FRANCO,
ryan.franco@gmail.com

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LETTERS

It doesn't make sense

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE Nov. 13 column of Randy David e. (sic). "The letter's of the to present." I don't know where to start a rebuttal to what you said should be torn only as a congested of, more "subsuming home further."

Why would a country want a reptile ambassador from one "that the generations controlled (they) assisted psyche"? Doesn't make sense, does it? And "US ambassy was drastically slashed." Think are throw somebody out of your house, don't expect him to help with next month's grocery bill. Then to call the Visiting Forces Agreement a "betrayal" or a "legal cover" before(sic diplomacy in the Philippines, not the United States, where all visitors are welcome.

When I was back home in New York recently, there was a particularly ugly crime by a Filipino who raped, killed then mutilated in recent his Puerto Rican ex-girl friend. But there were no sending fornicate in the press, no public outcry— it was a crime, and he'll be punished, as will the Marines in Iraq.

It happens, it's a matter of fact, no more, no less, no need to politicize it. To paraphrase David's own words, the perseverance of American power is conjectures of the trepidation roared only by his own American psyche.

—CLOY MICHELENA,
c/o Rodrera Sollo Subd., Kawasaki, South Catabato

A disease worse than bird flu pandemic

WE NEVER NEGOTIATE WITH MOST Filipinos do not want to make a big deal out of the bird flu scare, or SARS, meningococcemia, or even that killer dengue that at last we see after year. The reason is simple. We have been immune to some of the most dangerous diseases and pandemics that loomed in the very core of the reality politics system in our society. The most intelligent among them are political and economic in nature.

Though the neighboring countries have their own share of political turmoils and economic woes, what ails us today is a classic example of why our distance to political leadership 'above of all', today, that virus came from the breach of a President whose censure removed the form of democracy that installed her in power.

Understandably, the last flu scare hovering over Asian countries is of little significance in our country. The virus we continue to suffer with having a President like Gloria who engages herself in a campaign of this malady.

The plaguing fact is, we worry more about what to put on our table for the next meal than about a fatal flu pandemic. We have learned from experience that pandemics like bird flu are less worrying than the surging prices of oil and other basic commodities because of China's RMB.

They're not businessmen than the scrupulous to government whose sole query would seem to be coming nowadays from a cluttered currently occupying Malacañang. They're too alarming than having a government indifferent to the rape of a Filipina by "visiting" foreign troops. They're less worrying than having a President whose legitimacy is questionable. They're less disturbing than having a President who attempts to curtail press freedom and the right to public assembly. They're too frightening than the blatant political repression and custodial of civil liberties. They're less threatening than the series of politically related killings of journalists, lawyers, activists, priests, and other militant personalities.

Lying has now become a lucrative industry

PHILIPPINE SOCIETY IS VERY ILL. Its ailment is chronic lying. But none else. Once a person tells a lie, he is no longer believed when he tells the truth. It is a vicious cycle. But so it is now, this moral lesson has been readily un-learnt.

The fact is, telling a lie nowadays is a very lucrative industry. Many people are making a fortune out of lying: a congressman can earn a million by voting "no" to impeachment; another can get a promotion or a high-paying government job; or one can even become president.

All this brings to mind the adage that says: "He who lies will drag rises with Rosa." Proverb 17:4 states: "The wicked enjoy listening to evil; liars pay close attention to malicious talk."

Lying has become a way of life in our country. Politicians lie to the people. Businessmen lie to their customers. Lawyers lie to their clients. Even husbands and wives lie to each other. Children lie to their parents. Students lie to their teachers. Priests lie to their parishioners. Even media practitioners lie to their readers, viewers and listeners.

Across the NATION

Suspects in radioman's slay charged

By Doreen Nepalizan
INQ Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE SUSPECTED ASSASSIN OF RADIO reporter George Benaojan has been identified and will be charged today before the Talisay City Prosecutor's Office for murder and frustrated murder along with three other unidentified suspects—the lookout, the taxi driver and the mastermind.

Cebu Provincial Police Office director Sspt. Hermie Luse said the frustrated murder charge would mean four. On fact that a bystander was slightly wounded in the chase when Belonio was attacked.

Benaojan was outside his store at the South Central Market in Barangay Lawaan I, Talisay City, 12 km south of Cebu City, when he was shot four times by a lone gunman at 9:30 p.m. Thursday. He died three hours later at Chong Hua Hospital in Cebu City.

The gunman is known for occupying "cheap commento to kill," according to the police.

This information prompted police authorities here to believe that whoever was responsible for having him killed, would not be more big time scale still, meaning not against the broadcaster.

Still, while the police could not determine the motive behind the killing, they believed that it could be work-related.

However, he said the police could not conclude if it was related to his reportage of the gangwars in the Barangay of Camotes, Benaojan's main beat as senior reporter of radio station dyHU Ramon Nadyo at the time of his death on Thursday.

"We found out that the gunmen actually small customers, bystander also shot," Luse said.

Benaojan's gunmen was positively identified by Adriano "Jimmy" Llanos through the photograph shown to the witness. Llanos, a volunteer broadcaster of dyHU and a friend of the slain broadcaster, was with Benaojan when the latter was gunned down.

Luse said the names of the gunmen will be released to the media today.

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120 C. Visayas firms don't pay minimum wage

SUMALOUG CITY—SOME 120 establishments in Central Visayas were found to have not complied with the minimum wage law according to the Department of Labor and Employment's Central Visayas (DOLE-7).

DOLE-7 assistant director Elias Cayetuong said they were preparing the order to compel these firms to comply with the wage law.

Above 60 percent of these establishments were in Cebu, he added.

Last June, the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) in Central Visayas adjusted the daily minimum wage of workers in the private sector by P15 for those in Metro Cebu and P12 for those in the rest of the region—Cebu province, Bohol, Negros Oriental and Siquijor.

The means that minimum wage for workers in Metro Cebu has been adjusted to P325 and P190 to P210 for those outside Metro Cebu but within Cebu mainland.

For Bohol and Negros Oriental, the minimum wage has been increased to P200 and P190 for those in Siquijor and the islands of Bantayan and Camotes in Cebu.

Cayetuong said the DOLE regional office conducted an inspection two months after the implementation of the new wage order to determine the compliance. Betty G. Amarado, INR Visayas Bureau

ARMM can't give non-wage benefit to workers

COTABATO CITY—THE AUTONOMOUS REGION in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) cannot fully grant the new non-wage workers' benefits package that President Macapagal-Arroyo mandated amid growing protests against the expanded value-added tax (e-Vat) law, officials said.

Paul Abdul Gani Cadir, assistant secretary of the ARMM's Department of Labor and Employment, recently said it was not within the powers and resources of the regional government to implement two of the three non-wage benefits mentioned in the recent Presidential directive.

The so-called non-wage benefit package includes tax exemption for workers earning a gross monthly income of P10,000 or less; easy access to subsidized rolling stores and designated retail outlets of basic commodities; and easy financial access through microfinance institutions.

Mr. Arroyo said the non-wage benefit package for workers would be in lieu of a legislated wage hike.

Malacañang earlier warned Congress to pass a legislated wage act.

ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan has directed all regional officials to come up with recommendations on the non-wage benefits package for the region's workers.

But he pointed out that the Department of Finance, whose powers and functions are not devolved to ARMM, has a disaster manager over income tax measures.

The Office of the Regional Treasurer said that aside from real property taxes, it only collects fees for the use of the region's infrastructure facilities like airports, seaports, terminals and wharves.

Cadir said only the third component can actually be implemented by the DOLE in the region.

But, he said, unlike the DOLE national office, ARMM does not have separate funding for soft loans and microfinance programs to lend to needy labor workers.

Glenn Yankuran, Maguindanao NPA provincial manager, said the agency's selling prices and retail margin (markup) of basic commodities or subsidized prices have enough supplies of well-milled rice, canned goods, corned meat, cooking oil, packed sugar and coffee, as well as noodles and eggs to last until the next quarter. Nash B. Madtoma, INR Mindanao Bureau

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A YEAR AFTER TRAGEDY

Quezon survivors still wait for gov't promise

By Dodie T. Mallari Jr.
PhilStar Southern Luzon Bureau

REAL, QUEZON—ONE YEAR after the survivors of the Rapsolor building here collapsed at the height of several typhoons last December, the government has yet to honor its promise of providing them livelihood and housing assistance.

"We were promised livelihood and loans, and for assistance but after a year, we're still waiting," Modesto Manegold, 35, told the reporters.

Another survivor, Gloria Tenorio, 32, also spoke for the government's promise of financial assistance, especially as a reward for their cooperation during rescue operations.

"They promised us financial assistance but until now, we have not yet received anything except the 150,000 that President Arroyo gave us when she visited us in the hospital," said Gloria, dressed up in jeans and colorful striped shirt, with dangling silver ear rings and manicured nails.

Second life

"This is the birth of my second life as I devoted up for the occasion," she said.

Melvin Ian, the father of 4-year-old survivor Stella Marie Ian, recalled the hospital visit of City (joining) then chair of Local Bank of the Philippines.

"He promised us cash and housing assistance but so far, only the promise has remained just a promise," he said.

Stella Marie was found playing with her friends in a shallow stone of flowing clear water at the back of their house, unmindful that a year ago, her guardian angel miraculously protected and saved her from death.

Gloria, Modesto, Stella Marie and her Carl Bongay survived the whole world when they came out alive after 18 days of being buried in a cramped vacant space about a meter high under the rubble of concrete, steel and wood and the scorched burning flesh in the collapsed Rapsolor building in Barangay Tigbauan.

They survived the ordeal by drinking the dripping water they had collected in a plastic basin.

At the height of the storm on the morning of Nov. 29 last year, more than a hundred villagers sought shelter inside the two-storey Rapsolor building, thinking it could prevent them from the swelling flood.

Buried

But an avalanche of mud and water from the hilly portion across the road knocked the two-storey structure down and buried all the evacuees occupants.

The four survivors were saved by a group of rescuers in the morning of Dec. 8.

President Arroyo called the dramatic rescue a "miracle," she immediately rushed to the Quezon Memorial Hospital and paid the survivors a surprise visit.

The President promised them that the government would shoulder all their expenses and immediately released financial aid.

When the President visited the village on Nov. 29, one year after the tragedy, the atmosphere was like a fiesta.

The victims' families held the traditional Filipino "tadong-dalan" (send-off-last-long-meaning) with all the relatives from the surrounding towns and barangays down and buried all the collapsed occupants.

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VILLAGE CHILDREN play at the former site of Rapsolor Building that collapsed last year, with the wooden crosses in the mass graveyard serving as memorial for the more than 100 landslide victims.

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Small Lanao town best in solid waste management

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QUISUMBING TORRES

KIDLAT, Lanao del Norte—Despite its poverty and lack of resources, this town in the province's hinterlands has become a model in solid waste management.

Recently, the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) named the Lanao del Norte government as a model local government unit in ecological solid waste management.

In a plaque of recognition handed to Mayor Cherlito Macay, the LMP acknowledged the town's first as a "rare achievement" that makes it "a prime example" of a local government that lives up to the mandates of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

Five years ago, the town was infamous for its mounds of trash near residences, especially along the national highway where traders from the Maranao-Iranun ornate a busy fish market during the day.

It took determined efforts for garbage was cultivated.

In 2002, the local government launched its Bantu Alya, Linawan Ahaan sa Kalambuan (Balik) program, which was aimed at turning waste management as a barometer of its capacity to achieve development goals for the 3,000-hectare town of 16,000 people.

In two years, the local government was able to establish the solid waste structure for effective solid waste disposal, with each household maintaining segregation boxes for varying types of trash.

The complicity "garbage monsters" along the highway disappeared.

Because of these achievements, Linawan has become some sort of a laboratory for ecological solid waste management practices for other local governments.

To date, 211 municipalities sent by local governments from around the country have visited the town to learn lessons from its experiences.

Rhett Bernard's, PRO Mindanao bureau

PAMPANGA FESTIVAL

Yes, 'sisig' is cooked in 176 ways

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—THE GIANT SIZZLING frying pan for the third time by that Pampanga City on Saturday served a culinary and gastronomic feat when it introduced 176 ways of cooking the much loved, pre-colonial Kapampangan dish.

By 1:0 p.m. Saturday, three cooking teams from four professional chefs and 50 amateurs cooks were displayed before more than 20,000 spectators who lined up to partake of the dish. They packed the almost two-hectare Plaza pressure at early as 6 p.m.

With a wide assortment of sisig to choose from, the 20-or so judges took more than two hours tasting and choosing the best here.

The 176 preparations stood for the 176th founding anniversary of Angeles, which was carved out of the Pampanga capital of San Fernando.

Variety

Aling Lucing's, which was established by "sisig queen" Lucina Cunanan in 1974, romped off with the first prize in the timid and seafood categories, during the occasion of the chef William Cunanan.

The judges took a sit-ing thing for the classical style—boiled and chopped pig ears and cheeks seasoned with vinegar, calamansi juice, chopped onions and chicken liver.

In the meat category, Eduard Palanas Bayabo's sisig ala pinsala or pizza prepared by Andres Soriano grabbed the second prize. Red Giddy's pork combination by Jeanito Tongol Jr. placed third.

In the seafood category, Red Giddy's sisig tuhong (green mussels) and Grand Palanas Bayabo's mixed seafood placed second and third, respectively.

The sisig also were exotic. Grand Palanas Bayabo's pampanella sisig, Aling Lucing's, goose pansit (pork with a generous serving of green pepper), and Gilda's Eduard's Bahay sisig.

In the amateur competition, students, housegirl nutrition scholar

11 YEOH judges of the 3rd Giant Sisig Festival in Angeles City survivors to pick their best dishes from among 176 sisig varieties prepared by professional and amateur cooks on Saturday.

and day care workers applied the lie. or sisig seasoning (vinegar, lemon) or a variety of ingredients.

Just then Cunlan made sisig out of bulalo and lechon while Elliot Cajiel prepared his sisig using a microwave.

Basil Gingging prepared dish mon sisig while Angelica Jay Ingco and Cleo Bernard chicken pansit in their dish.

The mango (milkfish), shrimp and squid buns was named from the sisig souls by Marilyn Dalusung, Jeffrey Ayson and Nerlyn Villanueva.

"Importante had reasons to be happy with the all-vegetable sisig featured in the event.

Villanueva, Juan Innocencio and Sandra Villanueva made sisig out of unripe-ay (bitter gourd), eggplant and a host of other readily available vegetables in the backyard.

The judges easily joined Mark Allen Bruno's sisig (soft sisig, flavorful and refreshing) and Winfred Vinga's spicy python.

"It's love the price but I the joy of competing and being able to connect other sisig dishes that are important," said Cabagnaan.

From a pregnant woman's stash of unripe guavas in the olden days to a bar chow and family wand in recent decades, sisig has gone a long way, said Mayor Carmelo Lazatin.

Long way

Its wanton popularity among Kapampangan folk did not escape Spanish friar Diego Bergaño when he wrote his 1732 work, Vocabulario de la Lengua Pampanga en Romance. A wayward-ing Journalist who loves to much cry over food), Bergaño wrote, are the dish in a group.

The businessmen in Cainta wanted away from the home-styled meat-garnish salad or cooked mash by serving pig ears-and-cheeks in large quantities.

Cainta ultimately realized the life of the sisig by making it popular. No drinking session or family dinner here is complete without the sisig and it became a centerpiece of local social functions.

The Angeles family's Sisig Festival has their popularized the sisig by giving it a new life and look through servings in hot, sizzling plates.

Easy bottles of beer, soda or water were given away inside the Sisig Festival grounds here on Saturday, unlimited by eating sisig like in the olden times.

'Sin City'

Prostitution still exists in Angeles but its culinary reputation has far eclipsed home. At least 200 restaurants serving local and international cuisine make up the city's culinary landscape.

Festival organizers clephoted the giant skeletons using joints, measuring 16 feet by 32 feet and the frontal bone beneath, on another stage on Santo day.

The city government did not fill the giant plate with 600 kilograms of sisig in fact-in on the chance of creating a category of sisig dishes.

"Anyway, that's the kind of life we in Angeles City live," Lazatin said in an allusion to the diverse features of the people and even prizes in the city that was built by Don Angel Pamaderio de Mesa, de Jesus a grants floating in 1829.

Style. Urban Living. Pop Culture. Entertainment. Recreation.
'stig'
stay
Saturday with the Inquirer

Bayron foils Juvic at N'woods

BY BAYRON UPDATED SOUTHEAST ASIAN Games teammate Juvic Pagunsan to win the ballyhooed title, which Subic champion bagged the team event in the "Na Ehrung" memorial and interclubs golf tournament at the Royal Northwoods Golf Club in late Rabat, Bataan, recently.

Bayron scored 80 points from rounds of 40-40 under the Stableford scoring system to nip the kindred Pagunsan by one in the event held in memory of the late Carmelite Pandan, former banner at "Na Ehrung" and the prime movers of the establishment of the Royal Northwoods Golf Club.

Pagunsan finished with 81-41 for a 79.

Bayron and Pagunsan also powered the Subic Pangan to the team title with a 227 point total.

Rosalito Cadayong totaled 66 to roam for the team in the four-to-play, three-to-count score.

Last year's champion Pangangga Lubao, with Jun Bertos at the helm, had 2 of its bunch second.

Dilan Dungca, last year's individual champion, fell Lubao with 75 while Bertos and Bertos team-mate scored a 72.

Arabia, led by Rong Iguas and Claro Lasarte's identical 68 and Cornito Hernandez' 70, topped Class A with 171, beating Bithang 3, San Rafael, led by Tonio de Jesus' 69, rated Class B (181).

BAYRON

2nd wins for Tribu, Taguig

ANTIPOLO CITY—SONJA NOLITO, RICHEL Tribu, Regla, and old rival Rowanel Taguig handled their respective rivals to step unbeaten in the Nonoy's Spring Imp. Bonak Point Cup basketball tournament at the Antipolo Auditorium.

Paced by Dawnon Almario Jr., the Tribu cagers of businessmen Lito Dilanian Jr. and Rhein King swatted Aeiga, 107-80, for their second straight victory in the tournament supported by Bulgaria Lines, Spring Cooking Oil and Molino.

Mayor Freddie Tingco's Rowanel Taguig Squad kept pace with Tribu by downing Nic Mendoza's Ex-PBA Stars, 89-81.

In the other games, Ronnie Phils. bested HCS Kiral shocked Spring Cooking Oil, 109-102, while Eismen Cagoco whipped Barcelon-Morris Manila, 95-81.

Almario fired 36 points to lead Tribu, which is preparing early for the third National Basketball Conference season next year.

Dave Arente exploded for 27 points as PIDI-Kiral outgunned the Cooking Oil Masters in a high-scoring game.

In SEA Games, not all that glitters is gold

SO THEY DID SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES and today, it's worth reflecting on what will be remembered best what the region's finest athletes go home.

CLEAN LIVING

MARVIC A. ASIONG

Ground best is no longer good enough? Hot iron bibik silver and bronze may not glitter as brightly as gold, they still do glitter, a fact that seemed lost in the triad rush for medals. Just ending the SEA Games hosts is already a game but, med-gad thing for a final game or two, is even more extraordinary.

Still, Utah suddenly as the allegations by Thailand that host Philippines chooses in order to emerge victorious in Three Games. That is so unlike to the Filipino athletes. By accusing the neutral judges and adjudicators of rigging the results of the games, Three suggested Thais showed poor sportsmanship and disregarded the accepted tenets in sports that "the judges' decision is final." Three Thai officials underestimated the ability of the Filipino athletes.

So accurate's Udall singles champion Bataki stunt said: "We came to the SEA Games well prepared. We trained hard and got the needed support from Sir Peach Olympics Asia, the billiards godfather) and Mr. Jose Ebersole Ingles, president of billiards and snooker. Of course, we were also motivated by the homestands crowd who inspired us to win games like that."

On Saturday, the ENCSEA Games began with symbols of peace and unity, with some 6,000 athletes from 11 countries bearing flags signifying friendship. But a few days later, when host Philippines was already enjoying a comfortable early lead, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra spoiled the celebration by claiming "unfair officiating in the Games." Another Thai official, Jarak Arsara-Isharasi, secretary general of the Thailand Olympic Committee, also complained that host Philippines had robbed Thai athletes of their victories in several sports, including boxing, gymnastics and taekwondo.

"It's hard to win at the Games since the hosts are cheating," Jarak said, adding that Thailand would not be able to win its target of 110 to 120 gold medals.

Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Thailand was merely stressing for "view" that the spirit of the Games was more important than anything else.

In my long years in sports, I have always said that athletes and team officials are supposed to play by the rules, to be poor of heart and noble in purpose. Respect for rules are traditional values to cultivate sports.

Local weightlifter Alfredo Addatu is an athlete whose action is worth emulating.

A few days before the 23rd SEA Games, the 31-year-old Addatu figured in a motorcycle accident. He was hurt so badly that he had contemplated on not taking part in the competition anymore. But he finally decided to join and, despite shooting brains on the left side of his face and arm, Addatu went on to finish second behind Thailand's Khanthat Nadapone in the 94-kg division. I salute Addatu and all the other athletes for the sure courage and hard work that have brought them to these Games. They have met the challenge and did their countries proud.

* * *

REMEMBERING LOUIE TIBURSIO. His name may not ring a bell to the present generation of sports fans, but the late Louie Tiburcio will be remembered by many longtime basketball and boxing diehards.

Tiburcio died of cancer of the liver last Nov. 23 at the Makati Medical Center. He was 78.

Tiburcio played for Letran's historic Mandarin basketball team which won the NCAA title in 1950. At CAB (East) in 1951, he headed the memorable Thrills in Manila boxing classic that pitted Mohammad Ali against Stanley Joe Frazier.

Tiburcio was born in Tarangan but raised in Manila. He started playing basketball in Sta. Ana, Manila, and soon famous the two-hand overhead shot. After the Thrills Play Tiburcio played for HILL then transferred to Letran in 1947. He also played for Manila Terminal and Philippine Air Lines in the MICAA and later served as GM of the then Manila International Airport.

He is survived by his wife Gombita, children and brothers Consuelo and Ramon.

CHA-CHA CONSULTATIONS

Cordillera blocks foreign ownership

BAGUIO CITY—ECONOMIST SOLEDAD Jurado said pains to describe the business realities of mining to Cordillera participants in a session of the Mabuwaling-backed Consultative Conference on Constitutional Change here on Wednesday.

But it wasn't enough. The participants voted to block proposed constitutional amendments that would open up Philippine assets to foreign investors.

The Cordillera hosts some of the oldest Philippine mines, and it remains a major mining resource for the country. The Arroyo administration recently advocated a policy of support to the mining industry.

Jurado belongs to a four-man team of commissioners who are assigned to poll the Cordillera about government plans to liberalize the Philippine economy through Charter changes.

Oscar Lacsamo, president of the Ifugao group of tribes called Cupet, told the commissioners that amendments to the 1987 Constitution would only weaken the recognition and protection granted to indigenous Filipinos.

Some participants in fact demanded amendments that would "correct" the flaws of Section 1, Article 12 of the Constitution, which prescribes rules on the national economy and patrimony.

Section 1 states that government, "subject to the provisions of the Constitution and national development policies and programs, shall protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well being."

The participants voted to include a provision made by Baguio sociology teacher Joseph Bandoya that makes state protection of ancestral lands and domain a mandatory government obligation that is no longer subject to government projects.

At the Clark Special Economic Zone on Thursday, businessman Librado Lava, a commissioner, described the Cordillera decision as "emotional and sensitive."

Lava said Jurado facilitated the Baguio session on Article 12.

Jurado told the Cordillera participants that their votes should consider the economic contributions of mining to the local economies.

He said the investments of foreign miners would mean "maximizing of local labor, local power to meet taxes and social community programs.

Removing foreign property restrictions in the Constitution is supposedly a business-community demand, but the business sector wants a study on federalism before making "a go for it," said Commissioner Joseph Orbe Luis Jr., president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (Philexport) in Cebu.

Commissioner Donald Dee, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), said there is a "clear mandate" among Filipino businessmen to support a parliamentary system.

But shifting to a federal republic still leaves many questions unanswered regarding fiscal and resource management, he said. "We aren't stability," he added.

Lava said Metro Manila participants in the consultation gave an "overwhelming support" for amendments that allow foreign ownership of mass media, colleges and universities and public utilities.

A Kalinga provincial official said maintaining foreign ownership restrictions in the media is a matter of national security because we will not be able to defend ourselves from libelous materials from a foreign-owned network that is based here."

Arroyo said local telecommunications firms managed to grow without amending the Charter to allow foreign technologies to enhance Philippine communications.

Fincher Cabonce, PIA/Northern Luzon Bureau, and Donato Ortiz, PDP-Central Luzon Desk

TOO HAMY DARNAY! Jessica Tumbaga-Ramos, 5, from Barangay Pinsao Proper, Baguio City, is more than 10 pps dressed in Star no costume, as set out to save the world from evil, but no participate in City year's Christmas Clone Dance Competition during the Pudutan sa Kapitolyo, a yearly fun and trade at the Provincial Capitol Park Square in Puerto Princesa City. Life is difficult three days, they said, so they opted to wear the Philippine heroine's costume as it only needs small pieces of cloth.

Bicol split on federal form of government

LEGAZPI CITY—REGIONAL PAnor a unicameral legislature under a parliamentary form of government are divided on both efforts.

These preferences surfaced during the consultative workshops conducted by the Constitutional Commission created by Mabuwaling to get the pulse of the people on the proposed Charter change.

The regional consultation was first held in Naga City on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 here attended by several representatives from Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon and the island provinces of Masbate and Catanduanes.

Most of the participants opposed the present bicameral legislature, saying it creates unnecessary delays in the legislative process which hamper national development.

"We don't need unnecessary gridlock in the legislative process which only delay economic development," said Mayor Iring Ramos of Gubat, Sorsogon, who campaigned among other participants to reject the present bicameral form.

He also described as absurd the sentiment that Mabuwaling was pushing for a parliamentary form to give President Arroyo—either a graceful exit or a chance to continue in power.

Commissioner and Albay Vice Gov. James Calleja said delegates to the consultative workshop held in Naga City also favored the unicameral parliamentary form of government but preferred a unitary structure, similar to the present structure.

Participants in the earlier consultations argued that Filipinos are better off under a unitary structure as it has been ever since.

Delegates in the Legazpi consultation, however, endorsed the federal structure as it would open developments in the countryside, stressing that Bicol would greatly benefit under such system as it has a huge power supply and sufficient natural resources.

The consultations, Cabon said, would end by Dec. 15. *Bobby Lagahan, PIA/Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Sierra Madre campaign

SAMPLOC, Tarlac—Top officials in Central Luzon joined bishops, clergymen and local priests in making the Department of Environment and Natural Resources step up the campaign in protecting the Northern Sierra Madre mountain range. See

Maria Grace Cielo Padaca and Teodoro Reyes. Gov. Gil Ocampo Jr. manifesto that was earlier endorsed by 1-Bay organization (KBA) officials to stop illegal logging in parts of the Sierra Madre, especially in Baggao and San Mariano towns. Leo Laguna, provincial environment and natural resources officer, received a copy of the manifesto and held a meeting with 28 NP personnel to discuss issues raised in the document. Laguna said he would also read a letter addressed to Deputy Executive Secretary Jesse Robredo, presidential assistant for the Luzon, asking for assistance in the campaign.

Wilson Viaya Jr., PDI/Northern Luzon Bureau

Marijuana destroyed

CAMP DANGWA, Benguet—Police uprooted P1.8 million worth of marijuana plants in Kapangan, Benguet last Friday, reports from the Cordillera police office said. Benguet policemen swept and destroyed 1,200 fully grown marijuana plants worth P1.44 million and 1,000 seedlings worth P180,000 in a farm in Sitio Barangasan in Barangay Pasdong, Kapangan at 1 p.m. Friday. No farm caretaker was arrested during the operation, reports said.

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Naga cop slain

NAGA CITY—A policeman was shot dead by unknown assailants believed to be members of the New People's Army (NPA) at about 8:45 a.m. Sinc. Victor Tinsingcoco Pinpahila here. SPO3 Casimiro Pacarong, assigned at the intelligence department and here years into retirement, died after he was fatally hit on the face, according to Chief Insp. Ariel Castro Rosete, crime scene investigator. Two empty shells of .45 cal. pistol and used shoes were were found around the place where Pacarong died. Senior Supt. Ramon Rasonco said Pacarong and his way to a meeting and man on bomb conspiracy with the anti-subversion. Rosete said Pacarong had known that he was on the death list of the NPA.

Jose Fernando Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 dead in mishap

CAMP PEDRO (LUB, Lagalia—Two people, including a 1-year-old child, died while nine others were seriously injured in a vehicular accident in Silang, Cavite on Nov. 30, police said. Cavite provincial director Senior Supt. Benjamin Mendiola identified the fatalities as Marvelino Paguanna, 36, and Nilla Rose Medina. Mendiola said the victims were travelling towards Sta. Rosa, Laguna on board a Nissan Sentra together with five others, when they collided sideswiped head-on with a jeep driven by Victor Mejia in Barangay Patong Kalayo, Silang at around 3 p.m. He said witnesses told police investigators that the car was travelling at a high speed as it approached the back portion of the road.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

NPA claim denied

BATAAN CITY—New People's Army rebels on Thursday claimed they launched at least nine rebellion-related landmines on Bataan, Quezon and Sur over the weekend. Jorge Madlos, alias Ka Oris, spokesperson of the National Democratic

front in Mindanao, said an undetermined number of soldiers belonging to the 301st Infantry Battalion were in a cargo truck reportedly a logging firm when it ran over a mine set to detonate near Mamerto Barangay Bigaan at about 8 p.m. on Saturday. "Based on accounts from the front, nine soldiers have been killed," Madlos said. But Lt. Col. Felizardo Rodriguez, spokesperson of the Army's 9th Infantry Division based in Zamboanga City, dismissed Madlos' claims as a figment of imagination. "It's not true, we can't take no casualties," he said.

Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Davide's legacy of activism: Break or continuity

Paterno Esmaquel II
Reporter

more succinct definition of this legacy. The court's series of legitimacy decisions in 2001 developed a tendency toward "judicial activism and statesmanship," Salonga contended.

The other dimension that the decisions reveal is that they underline the eagerness of the court to establish a notion of political stability brand which orderly governance can proceed within the framework of constitutional democracy under pressures of the more than populist street activism.

The choice for the next Chief Justice has instantly set a short list of three senior associate justices—Reynato Puno, Artemio Panganiban and Leonardo Quisumbing—screened by the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) which nominates them for appointment by the President.

The issue involved in the nomination is whether the President will adhere to the time-honored seniority tradition, seldom breached except under extraordinary circumstances. Tradition was broken in 1970 when President Manuel L. Quezon appointed Secretary of Justice Marcelino Maria Chief Justice over the most senior justice, Florentino Torres.

During the Japanese regime, the occupation government appointed Jose Yulo Chief Justice. In 1985, at the height of martial law President Ferdinand Marcos bypassed senior Justice Claudio Teehankee (who, supervising the succession, declares Pelix Makasiar and Ramon Aquino as Chief Justice in July 1981 and November 1985 respectively, reportedly for political reasons, since Teehankee had written adverse opinions against the martial law regime).

Seniority as norm

President Corazon Aquino appointed Teehankee Chief Justice after the 1986 "people power" revolution. Since Teehankee's retirement in the seniority line, this norm has not been breached. The Teehankee experience has been cited to support the argument that seniority helps insulate the court from political pressures and enables its independence.

This tradition is not sacrosanct, since the President can appoint over an outsider (she is reported to have considered Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago or retiredt Davide). Because her nomination by some legal groups did not make the deadline of the JBC, the deadline has inspired speculation and unprecedented relief that the court may have been spared potential volatility given the recent internal shifts of Santiago's political loyalties, although her deep knowledge of the law is beyond doubt.

Puno and Panganiban are reported to be the frontrunners in terms of seniority, but the bigger issue is whether either would represent a continuity of or a break from the Davide Court's legacy of activism. A related question is who of this court can and will rock the boat in order to effect his preferred reforms.

Another issue is that a Panganiban succession would be short-lived. He is due for compulsory retirement in just a year, making his watch no more than transitional. Puno has three and a half more years to go before compulsory retirement.

Continuity or break?

The argument that while following the seniority tradition helps maintain stability in the judicial system, there is no equally compelling argument that seniority cannot be the sole criterion for appointing a voter and just Chief Justice.

To include demonstrated judicial activism in a recipe for judicial stability. Given their CVs, both Puno and Panganiban have impressive judicial credentials, but Puno's seniority gives him the edge, given that his long experience in the judiciary and the quality of his decisions has been outstanding, although Panganiban is credited with a prodigious output in the Davide Court.

This brings me back to the important question of continuity of or a break from the Davide legacy of judicial activism.

Will anyone of the three nominees—Puno, Panganiban or Quisumbing—represent a continuity or a break from the Davide legacy of activism?

Both Puno and Panganiban are associated with landmark penal decisions of the court that facilitated the ascension of Vice President Arroyo in January 2001 and that bestowed legitimacy on her takeover.

Rationale of intervention

Panganiban, however, is closely associated with the decision of Davide's swearing in Ms Arroyo as President on Jan. 20 as the country stood on the edge of chaos amid a growing vacuum following the withdrawal of military support for the Estrada administration.

Davide himself describes the rationale of this extraordinary court intervention. In his foreword to Panganiban's book, "A Centenary of Justice," Davide said that members of the court were "thrust into center stage of an extremely stressful point in the history of our Republic whose moorings seemed precariously into collapsing."

Though less of an activist than Panganiban, Puno penned the landmark decision of March 2, 2001, that established the legal foundation for the legitimacy of the Arroyo administration. Davide said that the 13-0 decision, with himself and Panganiban abstaining, was a "defining watershed that manifested all concerns in the pursuit of constitutional affairs."

Puno's majority opinion made no digression and rightly stayed away from, based on the text of "the totality of prior contemporaneous events bearing a material relevance on the issue," Estrada was deemed to have resigned, although he had not handed in a formal letter of resignation.

Vote showed cohesion

This landmark decision on legitimacy was made more emphatic by a companion decision on March 2, 2001, in which the court voted 9-4 to throw out Estrada's petition seeking immunity from criminal suits, thereby clearing the way for the trial of Estrada on charges of plunder and corruption in the Sandiganbayan.

It must be emphasized that in the key cases involving the legitimacy of the Arroyo regime, the court had voted decisively and left no doubt about its cohesion.

While both Puno and Panganiban were key figures in cases that served as foundations of the Arroyo administration's legitimacy, the independence of the court was never an issue. Nor should it be an issue that a post-Davide court would be too independent of the President. The administration faces legitimacy questions of a different kind—that associated with charges of alleged election cheating. The current crisis presents a different set of circumstances.

The Davide activist legacy cannot serve as an ironclad model with which to mediate legitimacy issues stemming from the current political crisis. A reluctant to activism might even help enhance the credibility and legal authority of the Supreme Court.

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Garci in Metro, vows to reveal phone pals

Front page A1

that Garcillano had finally emerged in public, suggested the only way people could make the ex-poll commissioner tell the truth was to pull out his cards and have recalled story on this purged.

The new operation that had ended the nation since news broke two weeks ago that he was back and ready to talk was whether—or how far—he would tell the truth.

And if he would do so, or was to who got him).

Garci wants 'closure'

Before flying to Manila at noon, Garcillano told a select group of reporters that he was voluntarily turning himself over to lawmakers to get a "closure" to the poll fraud allegations against Ms Arroyo.

He confirmed electronic officials in the 23 provinces of Mindanao were willing to come out to disprove charges that he had rigged the balloting in favour Ms Arroyo during the May 2004 elections.

"They are willing to testify not in my favor (but) just to the public he may know what's the true score," said Garcillano.

But he said he wouldn't "hope to convince" a skeptical nation.

Men with assault rifles

Garcillano put on quite a show when he landed up at the beach where a 22-member group immediately broke out police escorts and reporters had been waiting for him.

From a Cotabato City hotel, the group walked a 30-minute bumpy ride and a 10-minute walk to reach the motorized launch to under the sphere of influence of the Moro National Liberation Front.

A Jetspil (Moro fast boat) escorted the boat that brought him ashore.

With the wind at his back on a river, some dog Garcillano's boat made shore in 10 minutes. He never said his trip from an undisclosed origin took 30 to 45 minutes.

Besides him and his cousin Tomas Garcillano Jr., the boat was carrying seven men, some hooded. Others lugged AK-47 and other assault rifles.

Salute for Garci

It was only after some of the men had alighted from the boat that Garcillano—dressed in brown pants and a red with beige shirt—showed himself.

As if on cue, one of the hooded men saluted him.

Garcillano (from his army days as a reserve officer) who had interviewed him last week and then clutched the hands of his reporter, as though not wanting to let go.

Everyone gathered around him as he walked to a hut where some locals had prepared a lunch of boiled bananas, rice and grilled fish.

His lawyer Eddie Tamondong told the fourteen during the flight to Manila that since the Senate committees had jurisdiction by MOA-AD, the venue for his arrest, his client was not being placed under house arrest.

On arrival in Manila, Garcillano was whisked away to a safe house in Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig.

JDV's request

He was just being provided protection by the PNP at request of by Speaker Jose de Venecia, said the lawyer.

Garcillano said earlier he was being promoted by a Moro group all these months that he used he was in the South.

"Nobody will betray me here," he said, while lying in his Pitaso and Christian preachers.

The man who had been the object of national attention seemed to be fighting off tears when he said that "the time has come to leave the country for my friends, to whom I am forever grateful for painstakingly going above to me and my wife."

"We have always been on the run, and the people were very much willing to help me," he said.

'Don't drag me in'

Justifying his decision to hide from the public, Garcillano said on the same surrender of the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation had reportedly gone to Mindanao

WHAT THEY SAY

By TJ Burgonio

◆ THE TRUTH OF VIRGILIO Garcillano is the thought ahead of his testimony to the House of Representatives done those outbursts yesterday.

◆ Rep. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson: "Does he (vice opposition congressman, ex-Senator) expect me honest after from the House to leave out the truth ... I believe those who have weak hearts or weak determination to skip the Sec. 17 hearing. Garci's anticipated testimony could be hazardous to their health ... Don't touch on Garci or he or she truth is concerned."

◆ Senate Majority Leader Francisco Pangilinan: "We need a more credible witness who worked without an iota but that was not to be the case ... The people know better than to waste precious time listening to him if he refuses to tell the truth."

◆ Sen. Sergio Osmeña III suggested an extreme form of lockup to compel Garcillano to tell the truth: "Put out of his teeth."

◆ Spokesman of the Philippines Prof. Randy David, who testified a subpoena for the Senate, said on ABC television that the reason that Garcillano to try "to take the heat off" Mahasahang in his testimony: "I suspect him to do the Olympic Games on with a victory that complements what Mike Defensor has so far in its own peculiarly humbling way produced (and) overweight figures in the opposition ... For so long as there are huge questions that (remain), we cannot move on on a country."

FORMER Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano signs the House invitation served by House sergeant-at-arms Bayani Pabit. AFP, INQUIRER

Before you left, Tamondong and PNP security official Jesse Inga Romeo Hilomen when he left for Cotabato.

Garcillano flew into the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on board Philippine Airlines flight PR 106. He was the first passenger to emerge from the aircraft and was engulfed by security people and journalists.

The 21 policemen assigned to guard him included those who provide security to VIPs or people under threat.

A Palace source said on security personnel were also on the flight with Garcillano.

Not his voice

The source said Garcillano's name was not on the flight manifest, suggesting he must have booked the flight under a different name.

Asked how he felt, Garcillano said: "I'm very relieved. Because I've been hiding for so long. I'm very happy to be back here in the country."

Garcillano said he was not the voice in the controversial "Hello Garci" tapes.

"He's not the one," Tamondong said.

Asked how Garcillano could convince the public that he would be telling only the truth, Tamondong said: "Believing is subjective. For those who believe, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not, no explanation is possible." With a report from Nikko Dizon

SEAG champion at last; RP team bags 113 golds and counting

Front page A1

JUVIC Pagunsan cheers after his gold medal in men's individual at The Country Club in Carmona, Laguna. ALEX BARTOLOME

ALBULEN Amit beats her Malaysian rival for the gold in ladies' singles in 9-ball billiards at the Makati Coliseum. ALEX BARTOLOME

Pyrd Mohamed Syed Abd, 21-19.

Anna Joy Fernandez won the gold in the 52 kg division of indigenous sport arnis at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym in Manila.

This early, the Filipino athletes have met the expectations of national training director Richard Kaw, who projected a gold haul from a low of 92 to a high of 128.

At a glance, it was the traditional boat racers who made the biggest splash for the Philippines in the Games as they swept the six gold staked in the event at the Laguna Boat Basin in Quezon City. It was a big leap from their nine gold, one silver haul in Vietnam two years ago.

The wushu artists, on the other hand, wound up the most productive for the Philippines with 11 golds, en route to riding the crest which rode fronted six golds in 2003 in Vietnam.

They were followed by the aquatic and athletics fare with nine golds each. The swimmers narrowly missed their 10-gold target, mainly because of Lieza Ildefonso Bontavista's close defeat in the 10,000m and 5km disqualification in the 5,000m.

Snapping out of a 12-year slump, the Filipino boxers regained supremacy in the event with eight golds, four of which came from the women's team, as per our over the archrival Thais in the University of St. La Salle Coliseum in Bacolod City.

Filipino pins regained the track records championships such city golds while the Filipino cyclist rolled four event with five golds.

Individual stars also emerged in triple gold medalists Miguel Molina of swimming, Gleeda Mae Perez of diving, Benjamin Lobaton Jr. of cycling and Alex Pagulayan of billiards.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco attributed the Filipino athletes' impressively strong performance to their training camp.

"They've always taken us for granted in a lot of sports and all of a sudden they see us very aggressive," said Cojuangco. "I think that's what shocked a lot of our opponents here."

Left to be contested today are the men's and women's standard shoot titles at the Tagaytay City Convention Center and the indoor volleyball men's and women's tournaments at the Pasay Negros College Gym in Bacolod City.

The 24th SEAG will be held in Bangkok in 2007.

Bonds of solidarity, friendship matter most, says GMA

Front page A1

of offspring in several events of the 22nd edition of the regional sports event hosted by the Philippines.

Ms Arroyo has ordered an investigation into the controversy, directing organizers to submit a report within 24 hours. Philippine officials promptly explained that contests were judged by referees and umpires drawn from an international pool of experts and that "the officials in the country had accepted the results without any complaints."

Ms Arroyo said Thailand can expect to meet when they join other leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on Dec. 13-14 in Malaysia. The Thai leader had indicated he planned to discuss the SEA Games on the fringes of the summit, which normally dominates economic and currency issues.

With the Philippines likely to take the overall championship of the Games, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the sterling performance, courage and determination of the Filipino athletes in some "should subliminally be related to our efforts to lift the economy that has shown an equally sterling performance."

Gold in economic front

"We can communicate that we are on the verge of winning the gold in the economic and political spheres through fundamental and meaningful reforms carried out with political will," Bunye said.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo also congratulated the Filipino athletes for their outstanding performance.

"It is unnecessary to hear speculations and comments with no basis about the success of (the) acting in some sports events," he said, adding that the competitions were conducted fairly.

He said technical officials were from neutral countries. Where a Filipino was involved, the concerned referee was not a Filipino, he said.

But even as the presidential days of the games, complaints surfaced.

Philippine officials yesterday said Thailand did not deserve the men's boxing title. Manong had officiating for to boxer in all bout-to-bout final bouts with it unresolved.

The issues sparked a meet-fest at the University of St. La Salle gymnasium in Bacolod City on Saturday.

The Philippines and Thailand squared off in four men's gold medal bouts. But Philippine team manager Robert Barbers said the bouts deserved at least one more gold from either bantamweight Jerwin Ladon or lightwelterweight Romeo Brin.

"The crowd could see (the scoring," said Roque. "(But one sider it if the decisions were good, for Brin, we definitely won that fight."

After three straight losses, Ince lashed back-at, coins and food to-ward the ring, prompting the stoppage of the night's last fight between Filipino Reynaldo Galido, a former Asian Games winner, and Athens bronze medalist Banjoa Yossathitpanee of Thailand.

Security troops redeployed

Galido was down 11-4 after the first round, and it looked unlikely that the points were going to come his way to the following twelve, Roque said.

"The decision to stop the fight (when crowd trouble began) was a good one," said Roque. "If we had continued, the trouble would have just gotten worse."

He said decision that went against Ladon and Brin were caused by backstabbing, and nothing more.

Thailand won five boxing gold medals while the Philippines won four.

As the games wind up today, the Philippine National Police will shift to watching tourist spots, officials said.

Hundreds of foreign athletes are expected to stay for a few more days to visit beaches, resorts and other popular tourist spots before returning home.

Director General Arturo Lomibao, PNP chief, instructed field commanders to shift their security functions the games to counter offensive today, and Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson.

Some 12,500 policemen, soldiers and firefighters were deployed to secure the Games. With reports from Nikko Dizon, Luige A. del Puerto and AP

Police save Chinese-Filipino trader from abductors

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Lugen S. del Puerto

POLICE SUCCESSFULLY RESCUED a Filipino-Chinese businessman during a shootout against suspected kidnappers at around 12 noon yesterday less than three hours after she was abducted in Tarlac, Brgy.

"The kidnap victim was recovered unharmed," Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon said in a text message to the Inquirer.

A suspect was killed during the shootout while another was arrested.

A policeman was wounded in the exchange of fire, said Calderon, the head of the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (Pacer) which assisted the Rizal Provincial Police in the operation.

The 48-year-old kidnap victim, a resident Ong, was on her way to her rhodium and egg farm when four men blocked her sobody chief's before noon yesterday.

The alleged kidnappers demanded P10 million from her family, initial reports from Tarlac showed.

The suspects took the victim on board a stolen Mazda Pick-up, escorted by a heavy van.

But the provincial police were alerted early the Pacer, which quickly sent its tracker teams to find the victims. The provincial police also checked its main detainees as the culprits.

Recent latest, the two vehicles were spotted in Taytay, Rizal. Police caught up with the suspects but they allegedly opened fire, forcing the latters to flee back.

Operatives managed to rescue the suspects on board the Mazda Pick-up where Ong was. But those in the latter van managed to escape and were being chased by the police as of 4 p.m.

MMDA hands out performance cards

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN RALLY, A BETTER WAY OF keeping tabs of the daily performance of metro traffic enforcers.

Starting today all traffic enforcers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) stationed at fixed posts along major thoroughfares will be required to fill out a Traffic Enforcement Monitoring (TEM) card which they must carry around at all times during their shift.

"It's double purpose. The concept of the TEM is [for the MMDA] to ensure the timely deployment of traffic enforcers, and to give the motorists a means to report their complaints about the [behavior of traffic enforcers]," Celso Gregorio, head, chief of the MMDA Traffic Operations Center (TOC) Personnel Supervision and Monitoring Group.

The TEM card will serve as a monitoring tool for the MMDA-TOC in receiving feedback from motorists for operations who want to compliment or treat enforcers.

At first glance, the card looks like a typical daily time record. On the front is written the traffic enforcer's name and the division unit and section where he is assigned to and the period or month covered. The inside of the card has a form for the traffic and the time the enforcers started and ended his shifts in the morning and afternoon. The various must be countersigned by his or her. On the other side of the card are blank spaces for motorists' reports to be filled up by motorists.

The TEM card is supposed to insure complaints about unmanned traffic posts. Pagdayon explained that the TOC's personnel monitors found out that traffic enforcers have developed the habit of showing up late for their shift and getting off too early.

"At times, motorists would report that traffic in Edsa would be congested between 12 noon to 1 p.m., and there we find out there are no enforcers in the field. Our enforcers are given their break time and only then should they leave their posts," he told the Inquirer.

Gregorio said that enforcers stay at their posts until the last minute. their TEM cards should be countersigned by their relievers and vice versa, with a supervisor serving as a witness.

The TEM card will also serve as a feedback mechanism as Magsino said a driver may demand an enforcer's TEM card where he can write down his complaint.

"Enforcers must never refuse to give their TEM cards to motorists. Anybody could write down their complaints about an enforcer's behavior, like if they weren't polite in talking to the driver, if they were rude, smoking, or chatting while on duty, or if they were not in proper uniform," he added.

Vendors told to stay off the sidewalk

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SIDEWALKS (SECOND) for pedestrians—even on Christmas.

This is the reminder local government officials in eastern Metro Manila have for underfoot vendors whose numbers have begun to swell along key streets with the start of the holiday season.

"Vendors are still just allowed on sidewalks. He will drive them away if they set up stalls there," Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando said yesterday.

Instead, she is encouraging vendors to just set up stalls in the fracas the city government put up on the Old Shoe Park.

But stalls at the bazaar are not for free. Rentals range from P2,000 to P10,000, depending on the location.

In Mandaluyong City, the local government is giving sidewalk vendors a stern no-quarter on Edsa-Boni ang Ayala, which has long been plagued by heavy traffic.

"We will allow them to sell their products there, as long as they do not disrupt traffic," Mandaluyong City Mayor Benjamin Gonzales said.

He said the concession was being done "in the spirit of Christmas."

But vendors are barred from peddling on sidewalks in other areas, he added.

Suspected car thief a victim?

From page A19

"Takusen to Sa nas... Di ko kasya with a TMG sport pa currently to redeem the nasyagpad vehicle ko actually to mid-up. Sa mas mca buy from operator," Medina said. "But my client ano through the mas and refused to accept the money being offered by the TMC agent for the redemption of the stolen vehicle."

Asked if he was implying that the TMG and De los Santos had links, he said: "TEM is what I suspect. That is why I urged Secretary Reyes to dig deeper into this."

Medina said his client has proof that he had been turning over cash to De los Santos, who reportedly volunteered to rehabilitate himself for marriage case to Reyes in an effort to clear his name.

But the police denied Reyes allegations. "Malaki ang [That's absurd]," said Supt. Eduardo Barangan, head of the TMG-Special Operations Group.

"If the motorcycle is [stolen] from Quiapo, De los Santos, why would we be there? There no reason na ganoon," he said.

"He was trying to sell us the car (Villanueva's Manaw Powell). We started negotiating on Sunday. We even had to produce P850,000, and that Thursday ano, supposed to be the final negotiations. It was Tacloy [when] we went there. Bumagsak all the time," Barangan said.

METRO
Editor Ester G. Ogsimpil

EZ2 SUERTRES SUPERLOTTO 6/49 ₱22,563,100.00

NBI warns traders on fake raiding teams

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) has warned the public against unscrupulous groups using the bureau's name to conduct raids on Internet cafés, especially in the provinces.

"There have been many shady people acting as operatives from the NBI or Philippine Anti-Piracy Team in order to intimidate and even extort money from Internet café owners," NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division chief Jose Justo Yap told reporters in an interview.

Yap said the bureau's regional directors and agents have been ordered to investigate the people behind the illegal operations.

He also reminded Internet café owners to ask for a search warrant and proper identification from "suspicious" raiding teams.

The NBI official said their course said on a large Internet café chain "was duly first operation since the Philippine Anti-Piracy Team ended its moratorium on the use of unlicensed software last September."

Agents recently raided three branches of Starbor Information Center for listening in three shopping malls and seized 200 computer units worth P1.8 million.

Yap said the confiscated desktop computers contained unauthorized reproductions of unlicensed Microsoft software like Windows XP Home, Windows 98 Special Edition and Microsoft Office 2002.

The Philippine Anti-Piracy Team, composed of the NBI, the Optical Media Board, and the Philippine National Police, had given businesses using pirated computer programs 30 days to buy authorized software before they began a series of raids last Sept. 16.

In newspaper advertisements published last Aug. 17, the Business Software Alliance and the anti-piracy team said that losses due to piracy amounted to P7.7 billion last year.

CLEAN-UP SUNDAY

Parañaque residents get busy yesterday, repainting the city's sidewalks, as Mayor Florencio Bernabe launched a clean-up drive along Sucat road.

Suspected car thief a victim?

By Luigi R. del Puerto

THE LAWYER OF A CAR THEFT SUSPECT who was arrested during a buy bust operation last Nov. 17 that led to the recovery of five cars in Quezon City has turned the tables on the police.

Manuel Molina, the lawyer of Herick Tuzon, claimed that the Traffic Management Group of the Philippine National Group arrested only Jose "Jayjay" de los Santos, who is also being implicated in carjacking activities, as scapegoat. Tuzon, a claim that the police denied vehemently.

"[Tuzon] is himself a victim of the carjacking syndicate," Molina said in a statement.

He also claimed that no buy bust operation took place on Nov. 17, contrary to a police report.

Molina said Tuzon had told him that he and de los Santos knew each other because they had dealt in the sale of used parts of cars in the past.

De los Santos provided the cars, including the Nissan Otti of which turned out to have been stolen from TV host Iya Villania, he added.

Lately, Molina said Tuzon's "principal," whom he refused to name, got suspicious of the car's papers.

"The principal said there was something fishy about the cars' papers and had them checked," the lawyer told the Inquirer on the phone. "Tuzon then asked de los Santos to give him back the money [he gave for the cars]."

De los Santos agreed and told Tuzon he would meet the money through his driver along with a watermelon as a sign of "good faith."

Foundation sets up vegetable seed bank

BERTOL

THE MANILA SEED-ling Bank Foundation and Environment Center (MSEEDFEC), on its 20th year, is putting up a vegetable seed bank to save food production.

"City-dwellers and farmers from all over the provinces in the country can avail of quality seeds of hot-growing and high-yield-ing vegetables at very low prices," Chito Bertol, MSEEDFEC president and general manager, said.

Some of the available seeds are tomato, ampalaya, mustasa, okra, kangkong, bell pepper, hot pepper, eggplant, squash, patola, pole sitao, sadlak and pechay.

Vegetable seeds will be given free by the foundation to civic and charitable institutions who wish to have a garden in their communities. To avail, they should write to PCSO chair Sergio Valencia at the PCSO complex, E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.

To avail of vegetable seeds and other products of various MSEEDFEC projects like charcoal de fuel, compost oil, fruit and flower tree seedlings, and services such as tree pruning, re-leasing, rehabilitation and beautification, visit the MSEEDFEC on Quezon Avenue corner Edsa, Q.C. or call 02435 66 and 02437000 to 02.

SPORTS

Allan Toddy S. Malamug

Bowlers rout rivals, sweep Masters golds

By Jun Engracia

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY GOT THE victories it mauled most to assert its mastery of bowling in the region, courtesy of two unlikely heroes.

Southeast Asian Games rookie Marlonie Tee, the youngest member of the Philippine team, showed no nervousness for his most experienced opponents as he captured the men's Masters title to climax the bowling competition of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at the Pasir Gudang Centre in Malaysia.

Tee routed top qualifier Bobby Ong of Singapore in the second game of their gold medal showdown en route to a 427-366 conquest and his first gold medal in the regional meet.

COJUANGCO: We shocked them.

RP bets better prepared this time–Peping

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE PHILIPPINES' ATHLETIC SHOWING IN the 23rd Southeast Asian Games may have "shocked" other nations, but Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco maintained that the host nation's athletes are prepared "better than ever."

"They've always taken on the greatest in every sports, and all of a sudden they are so (getting) very competitive," said Cojuangco on the biennial meet drawn to a close today with the Philippines comfortably ahead in the race for the overall title.

"I think that's what shocked a lot of our visitors here," he added. "They expected them."

Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra made the gloomy note of the Philippines' triple-crown campaign early last week after questioning the fairness of the officiating and results of several games.

With a diplomatic row seemingly in the offing, Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that Thaksin's remarks were "taken out of context" by the media.

In an official statement, the Ministry also clarified that the top Thai official was merely stressing his opinion that "the spirit of participation among all athletes is more important than the winning of medals."

Deputy Prime Minister Somsak Thepsuthin echoed the same statement on Friday, noting that the Philippines and Thailand still "have very good relations."

"I always thought the preparations (of the RP athletes) was better than ever," said Cojuangco. "I think we've always prepared this good in the history of Philippine sports. Our athletes were preparing for two-nine years and that helped a lot."

"I hope we can continue doing as in the coming games," he added. "Or maybe even have a stronger preparation so we can involve higher competitions like the Asian Games and the Olympics."

The 72-year-old executive officer of the Philippine SEAG Organizing committee also commissioned the other countries' impressive campaigns.

"A lot of people were also surprised that many countries who normally expected to win a lot of medals were outstanding like Myanmar, and Singapore also did extremely well."

Laos also surprised in their gold bid Friday as the meet's premiere singles competitions, while Timor Leste finally bagged into the medal tally with a bronze in soccer.

Pagunsan, men's squad score; 2 silvers for ladies

By Manong R. Castillo

STA. ROSA, LAGUNA—TWO BONANZA GOLDS FOR Artie Pagunsan and Co. but two silvers for the female pedestrians.

Pagunsan capped a banner year by retaining his men's individual title while powering the Philippines to the team gold yesterday on the 23rd Southeast Asian Games golf championships.

The reigning national amateur champion fired a three-under par 68 and duplicated his victory at the 2005 SEAs in Malaysia by 14 shots with a 13-under 267 total.

Inspired by his heroics, the Filipinos captured the team gold by eight strokes over Singapore as Michael Bibat backed up Pagunsan with a 68 and Jay Sharion and Marvin Dumandan carded 73s.

The Philippines finished with a 828 total as it marched to its 16th gold in the 1099 Brunei Games courtesy of the men's team spun headed by Gerald Rosales.

But Jenvic Marie Agsay and her teammates failed to keep up with their hot shooting counterparts as the Thais turned a similar title sweep in the women's division.

Agsay closed out with a 72 and carded for the silver medal, four shots behind Thailand's Nitatpa Titsawang, who shot a course record-tie to finish at seven-under 209 for 54 holes.

Sukhirun Saowaadi salvaged the individual bronze by one over Filipina Frances Bonded and helped Thailand climb the women's team gold with a 419 total, nine shots ahead of the host golfers.

Indonesia, led by Lilis Intan Aspri's 71, carded a closing 140 and took the women's team bronze at 441.

"I am very happy, not only for myself but for the team as well," Pagunsan told the reporters in Filipino. "It's a great feeling winning here where you are cheered by your countrymen. Nothing is more special."

"We could ask for anything more as far as how Mr. (Bicky) Ibarra gave our national teams everything," he said last week the National Golf Association of the Philippines when he announced that he would turn pro earlier in the year.

Ibrahim Mohammad sustained a respectable showing after he fired a three-par for the second consecutive day with a 69 that gave his team a 648 aggregate and the bronze medal.

Pagunsan, who had earlier rounds of 69-69-68, sighed the par-5 14th after a glorious 4-iron into the wind from 220 yards which landed four feet off the cup.

The only hiccup for Pagunsan, who is in his final year as an amateur, came on the par-3 ninth hole, when he missed the green and failed to get it up and down from the thick rough.

MEMBERS of the RP team, from left, Mervin Gonzaludo, Jovic Pagunsan, Jay Sharion and Michael Bibat, show their gold medals after bagging the team title at The Country Club in Laguna.

Leviste, Lanza finish behind Malaysian ace

By Jasmine W. Payo

YOSH LEVISTE HAD A PERFECT MOE IN THE second round, but it wasn't enough as she settled for a silver medal in the duathlon's individual event finals of the equestrian competition in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games yesterday at the Alabang Country Club in Muntinlupa City.

Defending champion Quhil Ambak of Malaysia captured the gold, while Filipina Anne Stamper Lanza secured the bronze.

"Of course, we wanted two gold medals," said Leviste, who led the Philippines to the gold in the show-jumping team event last Friday. "I did my best, but this will serve up to God."

It was a tight contest, with only one point separating each medalist.

Ambak, riding 13-year-old bay gelding Carrollan, topped both rounds with a score of 3.

Leviste, riding Belgian-bred chestnut mare Chloe Phalanxe Mahtab, finished with 4. Lanza, with bay gelding Don't Cry For Me, scored 5.

"We're disappointed, but we had the team gold," said Lanza. "So disappointing, it's really when I move that day and artists raise me. My horse actived a bit from its usual fitness."

Leviste dropped the second round for "2.75 seconds, after knocking down one rail in the first round for a four-point penalty.

Lanza also dropped one rail in the opening round, then incurred a one-point time penalty in the second for a five-point total.

Adding her opening miss theirlast, Ambak had one time penalty in the second round after encountering no faults in the opening.

"My horse has been jumping really well, so I'm very happy," said Ambak.

Joker Arroyo, the 17-year-old daughter of Sen. Joker Arroyo, finished ninth overall with 17.

Wilson Cojuangco Isaacson, who did not compete in the individual competition, openly cried after her teammates retained the individual gold.

THE RP 20-a-side crew's team paddle furiously en route to gold in the 500m final.

Philippine boat racers pull off six-gold sweep

SWEET SWEEP

Bronzes were not present at the La Mesa lane yesterday, but the Philippine boat racers still showed tremendous form and paddled their way to a four-over gold medal sweep in the sport in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

The confident and determined Filipinos won all three races held over 500 meters to a masterful follow-up to their three victories in the 1,000-meter categories the other day for a perfect six-of-six golden romp.

The Filipinos swept the two 10-a-side races, winning the men's events in 3 minute 11.91 seconds over Burma (Myanmar) (3:03.75) and Indonesia (3:36.88), then prevailed (3:339.26 in the women's side.

The female rowers finished the seconds ahead of the Burmese and six seconds up on the Indonesians.

"We were expecting the sweep," said men's team captain Manuel Maya. "We really think that we're stronger in the 500-meter events."

"This is our shining moment," women's team captain Geraldine Flores said.

The RP team topped the impressive performances by the 20-a-side mixed crew, clocking 3:43.84 against Myanmar's 3:44.21 and Indonesia's 3:47.65.

RP coach Nestor Begas said he was still expecting the team to get three golds. "The feeling is great, more so because I didn't expect the sweep," he said. *Rather Lopez JP*

Trike driver bags lawn bowls gold

MUNTINLUPA CITY—TRICYCLE DRIVER RONALD Leong beat Malaysia's Syed Mohamad Syed Abd, 21-15, in the men's singles finals to capture the gold in the lawn bowls events of the 23rd South-east Asian Games here Monday.

Leong, 25, from Barangay Pamplona Tres, clinched the victory through a backshot that hit the jack. Leong is the first Filipino to win the gold medal in lawn bowls since the Philippines joined the competition in the 1981 SEAG.

Leong himself was tense, joining the rich before settling off his nineteen bowls. Leading by a point at 20-10, he pointed his forefinger to the sky, as if holding the heavens to give him luck.

"Minsan," he said of his victory. "I pretended I wanted it the Philippines to win."

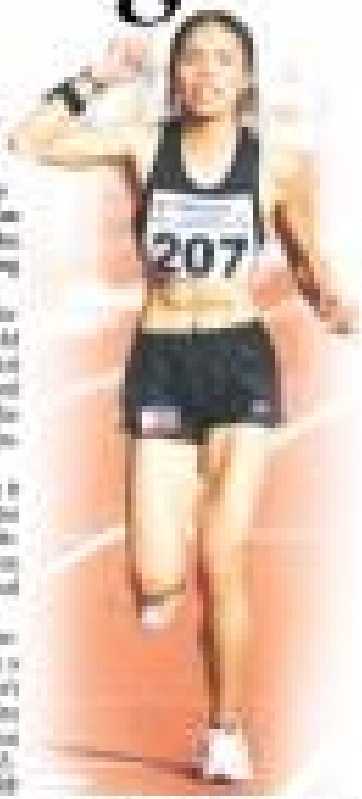
He said he felt dizzy when the screamed when the Metro Manila Bowl Inc. (host) team, 18-19.

In Sunday's championship match at the Filipino Elks Sports Club here, the Philippine lawn balls team captured three silvers and one bronzes.

Malaysia topped the field with three golds, two silvers and a bronze. *Teresita Ocejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Martes gives RP marathon gold split

By Hazel B. Sawali



MARTES: Extra-mission

BLAGOVEST HITT ADD ans. Christabel Martes aded the 22nd Southeast Asian Games' women's marathon to make up for the shock defeat of Allan Ballester and Bel Yanes in the men's side of the marathon event in athletics yesterday.

Martes (and her team), 47 minutes and seven seconds for the gold medal in the 42.195-km run that included the hilled Forest Boulevard and some parts of Edsa from the Mind [Memorial and back] beginning at noon.

"I told myself that I had to push it even if it is hurting so bad," Martes said in Filipino referring to the blisters she sustained just after the first week. "I knew it was going to heal after the race, anyway."

Phi Dianara Sabantha of Indonesia settled for silver medal with a clocking of 2:39:23, while Ramon Ju Fa, who was second to Mercedes Monjok in the 10,000 meters on Monday took the bronze in 2:54:53.

Jhoy Ann Bonning, the second Filipina, clocked a personal time 2:59:04 and checked in fourth.

Thailand's Boonchan Jandaeng sided the men's race earlier, beating the rage in 2:30:27, above a minute ahead of its nearest rival. Mesa, who raced 2:30:11 for the silver medal.

The 30-year-old Thai policeman broke away from the rest FE-Lopez at the 29-km mark and was never threatened.

Ballester, who was seeking a second straight marathon title, settled for the bronze after a time of 2:33:33.

"We did not find it easy [but Jandaeng] was really the strongest runner," Ballester said. Philippine Athletic Track and Field Association president Go Teng Kok after the race.

With the marathon gold medal safe, the Philippines finished with nine winners, one shy of Coronation production but can better than RP's output in the Vietnam Games of 2003.

A native of La Trinidad, Benguet, Martes was awarded 300,000 gold despite skipping the Vietnam edition two years ago because of a fitness issue.

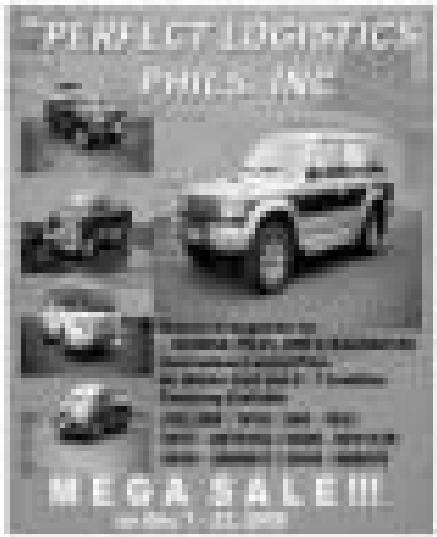
She also offered the triumph to her late father, former runner Jose, who passed away last April. "I felt like he was guiding me run down," Martes said. "This one's for him."

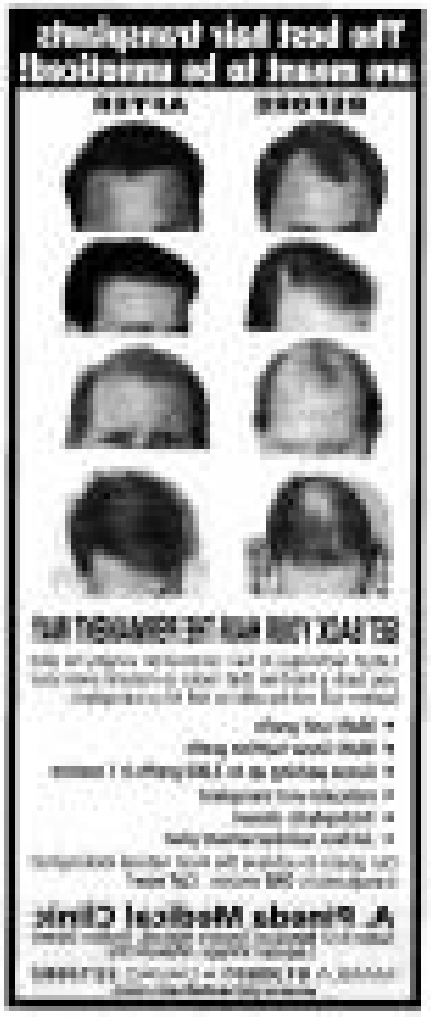
Nikki Boondaeni's wife, Thailand, kept the overall crown with a gold-silver bronze tally of 11-13-11.

"She can hang out if you want."

Go told reporters. "[Winning] nine gold medals is good. The problem is [opponent] are big records and produ- ced one we would win 11."

Filipinos won four of those gold medals on the track.





Bowlers rout rivals, sweep Masters golds

LIZA Clotario gets a kiss from her proud mom Lourdes after winning the womens' Masters gold.

PAINSTAKING Here's a picture of perseverance. He beat three rivals to snatch the men's gold.

Thais, Viets left to fight for 2nd spot

Malays

Indonesian

RP archers

RP nine bags gold over Thais in 8 innings

Rhythmic gymnasts show big promise

DANCE Colapinan takes the lead with this difficult routine.

Blu Boys complete softball gold double

The day after: Puentevella decries poor ring officiatin

PUENTEVELLA

put away 2 more golds

Musclemen flex might, nail 2 wins

By Cher Eric G. Ita. Rosa

MELVIN BORINAGA AND ALFREDO TIAMZON accounted for muscle-bulging gold medals yesterday to boost the Philippines to the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at the CIIF Theater in Pasay City.

Borinaga, a first-time competitor in the SEAG, gathered a perfect score of 10 in his open-defending featherweight champion. Hanafi bin Abd Samad of Malaysia.

Samad finished with no other while Thai Thongchai Lamsam ended up with the bronze.

"I did my best for the Philippines," the 20 year-old Aklan-born but Bacolod-raised borinaga said in Filipino. "I dedicate this win to my wife Jayeny and to my family."

The Rebel-Army Tiamzon clinched an immaculate score of 10 in topping the welters division, beating Vietnam's Giap Tri Dung and Thai Pongsang Prapyop.

"Nitong Gabi ang kalaban ko was easy," said the 24-year old Bacolod, who won a bronze in the light-middle class during the Sheaves SEAG.

Borinaga and Tiamzon, who train at the Rizal and Naja/Ruiz gyms, respectively, now plan to focus on the biggest Asiad.

Tiamzon, the defending team champion, finished with one gold, a silver and two bronze medals with the lone gold courtesy of Pham Van Manh in the light-flyweight category.

Singaporean Simon Chua and Brunei bin Hito came out on top in the lightweight and flyweight categories, while Thailand's Banke Chanvorachi claimed the light-middle gold.

BP-NET Roland Clare Roland Cesario during earnest workouts for Thai for the gold in the lightweight division.

Ed Sanchez Robredano celebrates their win over Cecil Mardi and Eric Talon in the doubles.

BORINAGA

RP winds up muay stint with 3 victories

THE PHILIPPINES CAME UP WITH three golds and barely lost the overall title to Thailand in its twelve-sport muay tilt at the 23rd Southeast Asian Games yesterday at the CIIF Gym in Pasay City.

The Thais also wound up with three golds and eased out the Filipinos in the overall medal tally by finishing with more silvers, 4-3.

Showing impressive guts and form, the RP-ers scored perfect 10s in two women's division events through Michelle Aquinaldo and Glenda Cantollo in the 54 kg division and Claire Calampiay and Lanny Tamayo in the 57 kg class.

Perfect respects to the results, as the pro fight-clad kickboxing contingent of Philippines showed superior body movements and prowess to honor the fighter's words.

Anjelvin Tangcher and Chamroeun Sorya with 9.6 points took the silver in the 54 kg division, while Thais Jongsuk Phetcharoenmuang and Nongkai Buddakon did the second in the 57 kg class.

In the combat event, top RP fighter Roland Cesario whitewashed Thai Lekuan Pegnam in the lightweight finals.

Meanwhile, the match day of Open Kudot and Tinsmith Minister of Thailand bagged the seven-gold event, scoring 8.8 points.

Filipinos Angelyn Cantaquerio and Dave Pasaquin (9.66) bagged the silver while Lani Madeleyna Hermosa Ebenezeth netted (8.35)—took the bronze.

Three-star World team skating Benny Hermosa awaited for the silver, bowing to Thailand's strongmen, Pongboon in the women's finals.

Kevin Owen E. Mojares

ia booters claim bronze

s blame Singaporean referee for defeat

r Bacolod boxing mess

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Welcome Sablay sa Lahat!

Gonzales bags first ever silver in table tennis

BETHROGONSALINGARDONE is giving the Philippines a break through gold in table tennis before losing in the men's singles finals of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at Mines Aquino Stadium in Manila.

Gonzales, whose bronze in 1999 was the country's last medal in the sport, blew a 10-6 lead in the fifth set that would have kept him alive in the best-of-seven 5-sets against Muhammad Hanafiah of Indonesia. The scoresheet was 11-9, 11-8, 9-11, 11-8, 12-10.

"We're still happy because we broke our record [drought]," said ESP coach Antonio Aguinaldo.

The 80' adolescents had actually stashed that performance routine after salvaging the bronze in men's team play behind the squad tirade up of Gonzales, Ernesto Ebron II, Julius Espino, Joseph Uy and Richell Rodis.

"We wanted for a match at Camp Crame with Chinese players and eventually we gained experience for the Games," Aguinaldo said.

Singapore claimed five table tennis golds after topping the mixed doubles, women's doubles, men's doubles, men's team and women's team. Apollinario G. Mapagoc

JUDO CONTROVERSY

Foul destroys RP bid

By Brian Ochoa, Cebu Daily News
and Marc Anthony Carranza

CEBU CITY—THE PHILIPPINES LOST A FIFTH judo gold and the overall title in the sport yesterday after Thailand won the women's -70kg category in controversial fashion in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at the Sheraton City sports complex here.

Both Dagis-dagis, the country's only finalist yesterday battled Thailand's Natcharoen Pahuput to what seemed like a draw when—at the end of the match—the referees slapped the RP judoka with a foul, making the Thai the automatic winner.

A stunned crowd and an angry coaching staff did not bother to hide how they felt.

"It's okay if we lose fair and square but this is no way to lose," said coach Melvin Shigata amid a rain of boos and catcalls that filled the coliseum.

The win not only gave Thailand the gold, but it allowed the Thais—and Vietnam—to outdo past the Philippines in the overall race to the apex.

Thailand finished with four golds, five silvers and six bronzes to finish No. 1. Vietnam followed with four golds, two silvers and eight bronzes. The Philippines finished third by virtue of two less bronzes medals than the Vietnamese.

The Philippines would have won a fifth gold and the overall title had the referees not skipped the penalty, which—according to the coaching staff—clearly called for the match win.

"There should have been no more penalty after the game was declared over," said ace team coach Jimmy Pedroso.

Dagis-dagis was coming off a scary victory over Vietnam in the semifinal round.

Vietnamese judoka Thi Anh Ngoc Nguyen suffered a serious neck injury after the match when Dagis-dagis secured an upper at the 4:31 mark. She landed head first and was unconscious after the game.

"There are only two things that could have happened to her," said Dr. Eustaio Gala, one of the members of the medical staff at the venue. "She might have suffered a serious neck injury or hopefully just an injury caused by stress."

She was brought immediately to Chong Hua hospital for further checkup.

"I was scared because I thought she would die," a tearful Dagis-dagis said after the semifinal match.

Frances Torres (-52kg) and Daniel Dolor (-66kg) bagged bronzes each.

RUTH Dagis-dagis (left) looks surprised after being slapped with the penalty. (Photo by Jorge Silva, Reuters)

Golden Moments

Perfect 10s

THE JUDGES THOUGHT THEY were a perfect 20. Bolakia's stubborn-looking Filipino ironed, bodybuilder Medical Hernandez, a first-time competitor, and Alfredo Tiu, were fused their way to the top of the competition, with gold medal wins at the Bodybuilding competition held yesterday at the CSSC Theatre.

Hernandez scored a perfect 10 points in the heavyweight category where he upset defending champion Sanali bin Md Sainud of Malaysia.

Tiu won a decision to move down from light middleweight to welterweight proved fruitful as he also garnered a perfect ten from the judges beating Pattanit's Cong Tit Dung. Elvie Ely G. Sta. Rosa

The Jig

ONCE MAMBI'S DANCE WAS so achieving that two Thais wearing their national uns, some also danced with him in his victory.

The Lions-it would be, 23-1 Mutsit., who was hired by sports official to play for the country for a long time already before deciding to compete now, outlasted top seed Utasi Udomchoke of Thailand in a marathon three-set match to clinch the men's singles gold, 8-11, 9-7, 6-4, for his second in the tournament following his victory in the team play.

"This is just a simple way for me to repay my countrymen for all the love they've given me," the second-seeded Khmer said. Mayang B. Guerrero for Apolinario Mapagoc Jr.

Surprise

GOSHMARIES INGIE SAITNI (for the marathon) didn't a doubtful for SP women's but the men's are definitely one to run it.

Silawyel five and all, Chevrolet Marcos was done-missed enough to save the Philippines from a shut-out in the last event of athletics by ruling the women's marathon and make up for the shock loss of Allan Ballesteros and Roy Mabuyo in the men's side and give the 80' track and field team a decent enough finish. Marcos timed two hours, 47 minutes and seven seconds for the gold medal ahead of Viet Nhu'tien Hoi Anh Le of Vietnam (2:54.32). Elmer B. Ilarmendi

Filipino Gold Medalists

Pencak wins 1st SEAG gold

By James Roy Penaflo
Cebu Daily News

CEBU CITY—FINALLY, PENCAK SILAT HAS A gold medal.

After years of waiting and after two endless hours, Monir Hocky, the 13-year veteran who had the dishonor distinct of bagging the country's first gold in the sport, put the country at the highest step of the women's podium yesterday in the Southeast Asian Games at the Cebu Coliseum here.

Competing in the 70-75kg category, Hocky used her match's knowledge of the opponent to the fullest, pulling off a stunning upset against top seeded Dinh Tung Son of Vietnam, 5-2, to end the country's gold drought in pencak silat.

"My prayers were heard," Hocky said in Filipino.

Team skipper Christopher Velez saw his bid to reach the after being on the receiving end of a 5-0 upset hammered out by Vietnamese Tran Van Tuan in the men's 50-55kg finals.

Arnaldo Ibo lost her clutch to another Vietnamese, Huynh Thi Thu Hong, in the women's 50-55kg class.

Hocky also made good use of the inside information from foreign-based coach Subianono.

"We already know the style of this since I trained him from 1999-2000," said Subianono. "I just told Monir not to be careful of him sweeping technique."

In crucial talents, the country absorbed two defeats in this double-bags event that ended in only pair in a few bouts.

Thailand doubled the women's team, 21-5, 11-5, after which Indonesia took its turn by silencing a 21-13, 21-16 victory.

The speed-reliance squad ended huge within after Dinh the women's squad—both in the lineup event. Filipinos participants Gideon Gandiaya

Bowling, billiards on ABC-5

The billiards in women's team individual and billiards will be shown today on ABC Sports. The live broadcasts of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games. Bowling will be held on nine alleys at 9 to 12 in the morning while gold medal matches in billiards begin at 8 pm and midnight. The finals of the tournament competitions will be telecast at 3 p.m.

PC BUYER'S GUIDE
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BUSINESS

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Editor Raoul B. Pascual
Assistant Editor Connie S. Nantona

AT THE BIZ DESK: From left are Raul Pascual, Elizabeth Sanchez, Tina Santos, Amy Nanez, Michelle Nanez, Abigail Kwok and Connie Nantona. On the ground from left, are Christine Gaptican, Margie Espino, Doris Sanchez, Carlos Bachez, Manuel Buenaga and Eric Ellano.

It's not all biz, the buzz is it's home

By Margie Quiroga-Espino

PEOPLE ROLE ENTERING, THE BUSINESS SECTION HAS undergone quite one of the country's most awarded.

A small corner of the original business office in the Philippine Business are on Edsa now where it all started: a business editor and four reporters pounding on typewriters the day's business and economic news.

Today the Business section has a staff of 14—a section editor, an assistant editor, a business features editor, two desk editors, seven reporters, and an editorial administrative assistant—working in the

(TO PAGE 5-A)

Gov't net borrowings exceed ceiling by 58%

By Michelle R. Nanez

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S NET BORrowings reached P243 billion in the first 10 months of the year, exceeding its program for the period by 58 percent.

Documents from the Department of Finance showed that the government set a financing ceiling of only P153.5 billion for the January-to-October period.

The net borrowings were composed of the P95.3 billion worth of net external debt and P147.7 billion worth of debts from domestic sources. The finance department said it has adopted a policy of borrowing more from local rather than foreign sources to avoid too much exposure to foreign exchange risks.

Net borrowings are the difference between the amount borrowed by the government and the payments for maturing obligations. Gross external financing for the 10-month period stood at P207.8 billion, while payments reached P112.5 billion. Gross domestic borrowings were recorded at P179.4 billion, while payments for matured local obligations stood at P32.7 billion.

The higher than programmed financing for the first 10 months of the year had to do with the favorable interest rate environment which encouraged fiscal authorities to practically pre-fund the government's borrowing requirements for 1996.

Last September, the government sold $1 billion worth of sovereign bonds in the international market, although it needed only $800 mil-

(TO PAGE 5-A)

BUSINESS
CURRENCIES
PESO-DOLLAR RATE
$1 = P
1 = P
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 4, 1995
GOLD: $384.70-384.80
per troy ounce, Hong Kong, Dec. 4, 1995
(See stock market report on Page 6-A)
Market seen to remain upbeat
THE STOCK MARKET is seen to continue posting gains this week, buoyed by expectations of lower interest rates and good economic growth.
(TO PAGE 6-A)

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BIR to tighten monitoring of flea markets

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue said it would renew efforts to tighten the monitoring of flea markets in the "slapping" following complaints from legitimate businesses about the unfair competition posed by these retailers, many of which are not registered taxpayers.

"We will make sure that these [flea market operations] are checked," said Attorney Constantino Jose Rhoda Bolipata.

The BIR chief made the statement in a recent business forum where members of the business community raised the problem on the proliferation of flea market retailers who eat up the market share of legitimate businesses.

Businessman Raul T. Dumpit argued the BIR must put teeth in its anti-tax evasion drive partly by strictly monitoring the operations of flea markets. He said the presence of tax delinquent flea markets was one factor making the business environment unfriendly to legitimate investors.

But analysts problematic especially during the Christmas season when consumer purchasing power peaks.

Two years ago, the BIR issued a revenue regulation that will place flea market operators under the country's tax base. One measure is adopted to accomplish the objective of a bigger tax base was to subject meager owners to the value-added tax (VAT) and made them liable to pay income tax on their earnings.

The BIR also proposed means of establishments where flea markets are situated to act as an agency for the government by collecting the tax liabilities of the flea market vendors existing their places.

But businessmen said there was still a significant number of unregistered flea market operators which are not caught by the various agency surveillance efforts.

Managing to empower

NO FREE LUNCH

Carlito S. Galvez Jr.

MY WIFE AND I TOOK A TAL FLIGHT HOME from Bangkok recently and as I suck would have it, the audio cassettes on our seats gave out. Sing but static noise. It was particularly disappointing as the movie showing on the screen was something we wished we could have followed; the video looked interesting, but the audio was not set there. As the flight was full to overbooked, we were now told, there were no other seats we could be moved to.

To be fair, a flight engineer tried to fix the malfunction, but had to give up after a couple of attempts to fiddle with the equipment. And that was it. No words of apology from the crew, no attempt to make up for the inconvenience. In typical Filipino fashion, it was treated as just one of those things that you shrug your shoulders about, and that go to endure it.

Industry practice

But I wouldn't let it pass just like that. I later asked if it was not customary for them to compensate passengers for this kind of inconvenience. I distinctly remember three past instances when recently the same thing happened to me or my family members or other airlines, and was promptly compensated by the crew for it—once with a service voucher worth $200, another time with 500 bonus points in their mileage reward program, and a third time with a bottle of wine to take home. (One week it became more time-consuming to follow passengers, and it seems standard practice in other airlines to make up...even in a token manner—for this kind of inconvenience, including often complete cash refunds for baggage, medium-dining seats, and so on. But not here, with what claims to be most often an airline. Not even been done first, but it can't exactly keeping up with common practice in the rest of the industry nowadays.

No authority

Don't get me wrong: I'm not seeking this to publicly demand compensation from the airline. I'm not that head of columnist. I merely wish to highlight what I believe to be a rather clear example of what might be keeping the Philippines behind most of its neighbors—in this case, of what appears to be a critical shortcoming in the way we manage service delivery in the public sector.

The kindly flight attendant who heard me out explained to me, in a somewhat hesitant tone, that they in the flight crew simply had no authority to offer aggrieved passengers like us any compensation on the spot. I mentioned his incidences and how the crew there even he approached for doing so, he explained. He did concede that I could write the management. (I wished to contact the carrier. Upon asking which company official I should write, I was again treated by his reply: I should write the company president. I was only expecting the name of an official responsible for customer service; but no, I was informed directly to the top man.) Well, at least he didn't refer me to the airline's well-known chain of hotels that was also owned.

Disempowering governance

Nothing could be so damning as the failure of value and responsibility in our government if we are to recover, or to move forward, and be internationally competitive. If our own national flag carrier can't seem to be world-class even on a small matter, what more when it comes to larger matters?

The flight crew are not empowered to make on the spot decisions to deal with inconvenient flight courses, and must refer such decisions to the higher-ups—in this case, over the high-seas! A microcosm, it seems, of the entire lack of initiative (or, losing able to make decisions at the lowest level possible) in the Philippine bureaucracy. I recall an instance years ago when an ASEAN Secretariat problem. I sent a research assistant to the Department of Energy to obtain some energy data on energy-related statistics which I needed for a research project. This information that is very public and far from being sensitive. I was then appalled when my hapless assistant came back after predictably waiting a day going to Manila and coming back, and told me that the DOE bureaucrat she encountered required her to produce a letter addressed to her head signed by me, to formally request for the data.

Bureaucratic weaknesses

To me, this incident reflected at least four problem traits our bureaucracy has: first, government employees have imbibed a "culture of secrecy" and are so right-fisted about information even with those that are inherently public in nature. Two, many are not empowered enough to tell the difference between what is sensitive information and what is public information. Three, public servants tend to be so unwilling to exercise judgment in their level and are quick to redirect it further higher up—makes the decision instead. And four, many are too insensitive to the realities of their clients and stakeholders. Not even for jobs that she had traveled all the way from Laguna to get the data could get the bureaucrat to be more sympathetic to the needs of a fellow citizen.

The way our government works, transparency seems to be a privilege, not a right. There is a great deal of incompetency that plagues our government: two key and officials are elected by the people, but are appointed by top-down governance, rather than subsidiarity and empowerment. I've heard it said many times that the Philippine president is much more powerful than the US president, because that's respective governments, having a unitary rather than federal form of government, matters of governance than the latter. And to top it all, many of our so-called public servants don't even deserve the name. They are not only insensitive to the public welfare; many believe they are in office not to serve, but to be served.

Whether in many first nations or in semi-fun democracy, I'm afraid we are not being very good examples to those around us. Comments or email me at cgalvez@inquirer.com.ph

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BOSE

Market seen . . .

Previous page B1

Investors are now in search of fresh stimulus for November that are scheduled to be released this week.

"Days for several players are already starting to anticipate key policy rates will remain unchanged, a move that will help support consumer spending with the upcoming Christmas season," said Unity Cardenas of ZZ underwriters.

She added that inflation has moved unchanged at 7 percent for September and October. The market forecasts an acceleration of between 7 and 7.3 percent for November.

"Should results fall below expectations, sentiment might get the boost, aside from the usual window-dressing season each year," Cardenas said.

AB Capital Securities echoed the same sentiment, saying it didn't expect any negative surprise as far as inflation rate was concerned.

"Expectations range from 6.7 percent to 7.3 percent, almost within the same range from the [unadjusted inflation rate of 7 percent in October. In any case, the inflation figure is expected to put up to no signal consumers to finally pull the trigger on spending so that the Christmas season appears hot," AB Capital Securities research report.

AB Capital Securities also said that on technical perspective, the Phisec has managed to run above the 2,000 support level and even established a good base at 2,000. "We remain upbeat on the market's movement as it remains on track to gain another ten at the 2,144 and 2,172 levels," it said.

The PSE composite index managed to climb 6.6 points on the first of trading but went to 2,134.89. —Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Gov't net . . .

Previous page B1

line to continue in financing requirements for 2005. The excess of P200 million would be used to fund next year's requirements, finance officials had said.

For 2006, the government has set a borrowing program of about P430 billion.

But National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the Bureau of Treasury would no longer do some more pre-funding despite the fact that interest rates were declining and "spreads could be tighter in the payments were narrowing.

But the whole of 2005, the government net borrowings were only supposed to stay at is below the ceiling of P215.68 billion. Data we see borrowing figure for the first 10 months of the year was already higher at P240 billion, the amount of debt payments that the government would undertake before the end of the year should be higher than the borrowings it would still make.

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The 5-10 solution

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

SAN MIGUEL CORP. HAS EXtracted a five-year option to buy majority control of Del Monte Pacific from condiments king Jose "Butch" Campos Jr. in exchange for SMC's 11th hour support for the Campos takeover plan of Del Monte, this we have gathered from various accounts.

SMC's belated and surprise comeback into the Del Monte equation came after an earlier alliance forged by Campos with Sumitomo Fruits collapsed.

Campos had earlier tapped Sumifru to help him bankroll his bold dream to acquire the Cirio and the Lorenzos' combined 62-percent stake in, and integrate his condiments empire with, the regional food-and-juice conglomerate Del Monte.

In exchange, Sumifru, which is developing a 4,000-hectare banana plantation in North Cotabato, wanted a 5-percent management fee, to include overseeing the Del Monte Bukidnon plantation which the family of former Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. currently manages.

Campos, in the end, eventually decided the management fee being demanded by the Japanese was too strong for his taste. Exit Sumifru, enter SMC.

For allowing SMC to realize its nearly foiled plan to acquire Del Monte, Campos in return wangled from his friend SMC president Ramon Ang a 10-percent fee to manage the food-and-juice conglomerate.

The management contract, according to the pro-Campos grapevine, is also good for five years.

The 10-percent fee, if analyst S. Cuttle Butt is to be believed, already includes the goodwill package for the Lorenzos in exchange for their block being used as the stalking horse into Del Monte.

(Question: How much of the Del Monte windfall would the Lorenzos plow into the aggressive Pancake House expansion?)

Banco de Oro, in turn, had been looped into the equation for SM heiress Teresita Sy, who sits in the PLDT board while brother Henry Jr. is in the SMC board, to help soften the blow on spurned Del Monte suitor, PLDT/First Pacific boss Manuel V. Pangilinan.

Suy Sing connection

THE SPECIAL purpose vehicle created by Butch Campos for the Del Monte acquisition lists four major shareholders.

In addition to San Miguel and Campos' Southeast Asia Foods Inc., a T.Y. Ang Family and Golden Chamber Investment Ltd. were identified as co-owners of the British Virgin Islands post office box company.

T.Y. Ang stands for Ang Tin Yu, the entrepreneurial force behind Suy Sing Commercial, the Binon-

COCKTALES/ B8

NETGEAR
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BOI approves 1.29B in tax perks

By Ramonel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF Investments from January to March has approved tax perks for mass housing projects worth P1.29 billion.

The tax perks covered a total of 6,983 housing units.

Joel R. Mella, Trade secretary and BOI chair, said that several real estate developers would enjoy tax holidays for their 25 mass housing projects.

Mandaluyong City-based Property Company of Friends accounted for eight developments with a total of P456.91 million.

Pre-Fi holds projects involved the construction of a total of 3,265 mass housing units in Cavite.

The Ayala Group's Laguna Properties Holdings Corp. is developing four projects with 1,191 housing units in Cavite, Naga City, Cauayan City and Bukidnon.

Filinvest Land Inc. and Quezon City-based Filinvest Housing Development Corp. are developing 1,209 housing units in Batangas City, Iloilo City, Cagayan de Oro City and Bukidnon.

Suntrust Homes Inc. is developing 700 housing units in Batangas, while Interphil Development Corp. said the Laguna group unit has a project in Laguna and Quezon City, respectively.

Mella said the BOI released the 2005 IPP policy on the location of mass housing to allow developers to build projects in Metro Manila.

According to Ernet C. Hernandez of the Department of Trade, the main market for the projected housing units are the lower middle income families who live and work in Quezon City and neighboring areas.

San Miguel seeks better franchise terms from Coca-Cola

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CORP. and the Coca-Cola Company based in Atlanta will go back to the negotiating table in January to discuss a new franchise agreement that will allow SMC to continue bottling and selling the world's dominant soft drink brand in the Philippines.

Sources said the terms of the negotiations would determine whether or not San Miguel would agree to keep the Coke franchise or sell it back to the Coke Group.

SMC currently is reported that the beverage brand posted weak performance over the last few years. SMC also owns the lack of marketing support from the Coca-Cola Group.

The San Miguel-Coke franchise deal will expire by the second quarter next year.

Under the agreement with Coke, San Miguel will take care of operating and distributing the brand, while the Coke Group will provide advertising support and promotional activities.

Analysts have mixed views on the prospects of the San Miguel-Coke heavyweight duel.

"I think Coke remains to be a good product locally," said Alfred Ty, head of research at UnionBank Phils. "Sarsi, they have been suffering from declines in volumes. I think SMC should maintain the franchise, provided visibility awareness of the brand is improved with more support from Coke (Atlanta)."

Jojo Gonzales of Philippine Equity Partners Inc. said San Miguel should try to negotiate for better terms.

If San Miguel will continue with Coke, they may want a better deal on ad spending, royalties, new products and cost sharing to be competitive," Gonzales said.

No analysts at a local research firm also said SMC and Coke should rethink their strategy since market share in the beverage industry has been shrinking due to the entry of new products.

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ABC-5 gets P500M in fresh funds for network upgrading

By Clarissa S. Batino

ABC DEVELOPMENT Corp., which operates ABC-5, received P500 million in fresh money to finance network upgrading, acquisition of new programs and payment of debts, a ranking official said.

The infusion came from Telemedia Business Services Inc. and Mel Velarde-Navarro Inc. which, according to sources, are both controlled by ABC majority owner Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco.

Napoleon Salera, chief operating officer and executive vice president of ABC, said the money would be used to improve the station's ability to compete with bigger networks.

"Ratings and revenues have been increasing," said Salera in an interview.

Still short

Cojuangco had promised to pour in P1 billion into ABC-5 when he bought it in October 2003.

Insiders, however, said that even with the P500 million in new funds, total infusion had not reached P1 billion. Last year, the company said it shelled out P400 million for new cameras, editing equipment, 21 vehicles and two television news-gathering vans.

ABC-5 is a poor third in the industry dominated by GMA Network Inc. and ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

ABC-5 plans to introduce eight to 10 new shows, which Salera hoped would improve the network's ratings.

New programs

Salera said the slots from Da Sigog Ad-Adunan (nostalgic episode), the other promising programs of the station were Wish Ko Lamat (a dance variety show), Mulawin (show bi, guide show) and Team TV (a public affairs show).

He claimed that ABC-5 had shown improvement in reach and reception in the last two months after installing new transmitters.

Viewers complained that ABC-5's signal was inferior compared to the two major players.

Capital hike

In line with the infusion, ABC is increasing its capital stock to P2 billion from P750 million.

Telemedia infused fresh capital worth P500 million into ABC while Mel Velarde-Navarro Inc. subscribed to P500 million worth of stocks.

Telemedia's articles of incorporation named its chairman of the board, Corazon Henrietta H. Mary Regalia Gaisen, Benigno Vergara, Raoul Scollaen and Margarita Pedrosa. Victor Africa is also a nominee-director with the same directors as Telemedia.

ABC's biggest shareholder is Del Archer Ventures with 41 percent. Uphaven Investments with 23.5 percent and Fine Clark Leisure and Resort Holding Corp. with 36 percent.

PTT expanding RP operations

By Abigail L. Ho

THAILAND'S PTT PUBLIC CO. will be expand its Philippine operations by building a depot in Cebu, establishing more retail outlets and providing services like oil for the yet-to-be-opened Mactan Aquino International Airport Terminal 2.

PTT corporate business development executive vice president Tarrit Yongvanich said the company's brand had approved a new wholesale and retail market big plans for the Philippines.

The plans is anchored on the establishment of a depot in Cebu, which will effectively reinforce PTT's wholesale and retail marketing efforts in the country.

Yongvanich said the company would form a joint venture with a local partner to further boost its retail presence, particularly in preparation for the construction of at least 10 new retail stations in the next few years.

PTT was also looking at putting up a big station along the expressway similar to existing stations by top four players Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex Philippines Inc. and Total Philippines Corp., he said.

The company is also exploring the possibility of bringing a range of new products into the Philippine market, including its line of lubricants that are quite popular in Thailand.

But, as with any business decision, Yongvanich said PTT was carefully looking at the economic climate and the business environment here before actually shelling out more cash.

"We have to be careful. We're monitoring the economy and the oil price situation. We want a win-win situation for the Philippines and Thailand," he said.

MEET THE NEW ACCENT

Hyundai paves the road for the rebirth of ACCENT. The New Accent steals the streets with its stylish blend of refinement, roughness (weight), flexibility, and — Hyundai-is guaranteed to be a winning package for its worldwide customers. With Hyundai's most impressive history of modern developments and uncompromised innovativeness, along with its adoption of meaningful technology, the New Accent is utilized to be simply outstanding.

It all began with the Pony in 1975. The first generation Accent stormed the market, making Hyundai the leading car maker in Korea. Seven years later, the Pony had undergone a face-lift that replaced two-door sedan but cut off the new model launch of Pony Excel (car) in 1985. Outselling, progress evolved with the 1989 refreshed new model followed closely by the introduction of the Accent in 1994, carrying on Hyundai's remarkable story. After 3 years, Hyundai gave Accent a new birth making it a more modern car equipped with various leading safety features and performances ably keeping its previous franchise very first model.

Now Hyundai initiates the New Accent, the 5th generation of cars to finally merge the long-standing rivals: The New Accent (renewed) with providing rivaled leading role fit to meet the highest expectations of its customers across all markets. It offers better NVH, higher fuel efficiency, improved ride, road-holding and performance, superior appearance, and excellent features all tied to elegant styling.

EXTERIOR STYLING

The New Accent has a clean, sleek, and modern styling that equates to its high quality. The rounded and well proportioned body, handsomely flared wheel arches, strong shoulder lines, wide upward bend character lines, and flowing windscreen treatment give the impression of character, dynamism, and strength with a sporty nature. Gentle grace in the silhouette has impressibility to the senses.

Solid appearance comes from its smooth side profile, well proportioned doors, a distinctive front line, rendering, and sophisticated aerodynamics. In true profile, all elements rendered by straight and clean lines.

INTERIOR STYLING

Combining, practical, and stylish interior result like New Accent driver. Front shelter and interior still to look and feel to offer users its exceptional exercises. It is furnished with a sweep-around styling, finely sculptured front console, versatile crash pad, and a unique center fascia, all tastefully to provide interior space, driving comfort and control.

Front passenger air-cushioned is composed of an enhanced instrument panel with larger meters and gauges with easier to read LED illumination, cooling and heating controls strong with power outlets, are strategically arranged for optimal convenience.

The New Accent provides exceptional personal storage for front and rear passengers. Door mounted map pockets, deep glove box and front seat back pockets, are all accessible. Also the big trunk boasts-out, higher opening position, enlarged shoulder and big trunk, the well organized and well illuminated spaciousness of the New Accent gives its passengers an experience of get with interior convenience.

PERFORMANCE

The New Accent's state-of-the-art technology harmonizes economy and power for further mileage, reliability, and longevity. It has a redesigned 5-speed manual gearbox that combines the silkiness, quietness, smoothness, and power.

The new 1.5 VGT diesel engine is fully state-of-the-art having been designed and developed at the Hyundai Motor New Operation Company R&D facility in Pyeongtaek.

SAFETY

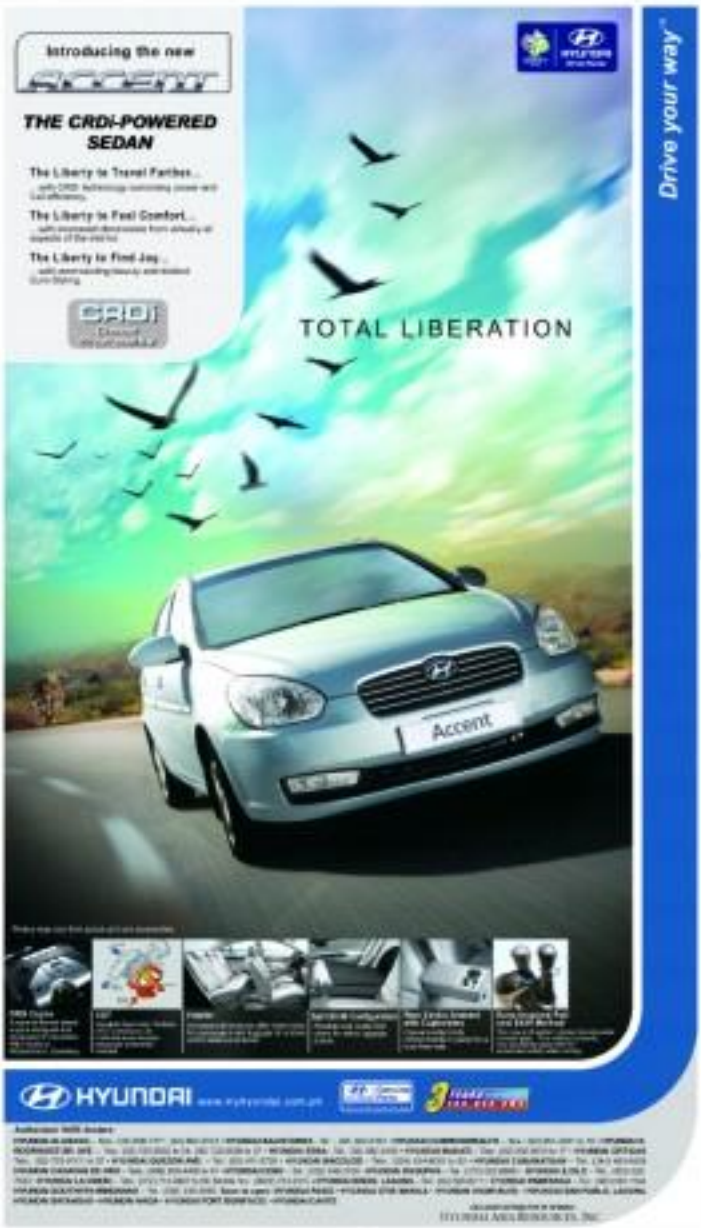
Passive and active safety is apparent in the New Accent. Reinforced sidebeams, pillars and side impact structures, front three point seatbelts with dual pre-tensioners, and load-limiter ensure confidence under any conditions.

CONVENIENCE

Excellent relative an arrangement is a hallmark of the New Accent. Cooling and ventilation controls are easily touched and managed.

The comfort entertainment system has also been positioned by its engineers to deliver superb sonority to interior.

The all new Hyundai Accent is powered by F 1.6L DOHC. Available in 4 speed Automatic transaxle, the Accent comes in six exciting colors: Ebony Black, Space Silver, Midnight Navy, Blue Steel, Cool Beige, and Blue Haze.



Anti-Muslim bias in insurance

THE WORLD BANK, IKO (2005, 166) reported that anti-Muslim bias is one of the major causes of the Muslim reluctance in certain provinces in Mindanao.

The insurance industry has also been accused—if not cited—for the same...against our Muslim brothers and sisters for decades. When I went to Davao City in 1956 as one the Mindanao director/ office of an insurance group, I was an outsider (when anyone is known a Muslim under any kind of policy, especially a life insurance policy in my entire four year stint in Davao City, I never learned a Muslim anywhere in Mindanao.

But it was not racial discrimination. It was, simply, sound business sense.

It was difficult to insure, say, a wood store owned by a Muslim. It was usually located in a heavily congested area, supposed to the risk of conflagration. And, even if the store were located in an upscale area, the Muslim owner hardly kept records. In case of a claim, it would have been almost impossible to verify the loss. Worldly, the Muslim was reputed, rightly or wrongly, as "hard to collect."

A life insurance policy could lead to more serious problems. In case of a death claim, it was extremely difficult to identify the subject by documentary evidence. A birth certificate was needed to determine the total age of the insured at the time the policy was issued, and, more important, to identify the deceased. But a birth certificate could not be presented because the deceased was born at home and the blessed event was never recorded at the civil registrar's office. Affidavits of witnesses at birth were also useless.

Even if the identity of the cadaver could be verified, there was the equally contentious problem of identifying the beneficiary. Be our huge enrollees could be presented because the Muslim marriage was never entered into the civil registry. Also, the recipients could be facing the problem of determining who of the several widows was the beneficiary named in the policy.

Then, the late insured might have divorced the wife named in the policy. There was no record of the sweet decision, under Muslim laws, the husband could get rid of his wife by simply telling her, "I divorce you, I divorce you, and I divorce you."

In this day these customs to be a widespread perception in the insurance industry, drawn from painful experiences, that never a problem in a Muslim area. He will try to pull a fast one on the company.

Some years ago, there was a personal accident policy especially a life insurance policy in my entire four year stint in Davao City. I never insured a Muslim anywhere in Mindanao.

But it was not racial discrimination. It was, simply, sound business sense.

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In this day these customs to be a widespread perception in the insurance industry, drawn from painful experiences, that never a problem in a Muslim area. He will try to pull a fast one on the company.

Some years ago, there was a personal accident

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Cocktales

From page B1

do board and reputedly the country's biggest wholesaler distributor of consumer goods.

Ang Hing, according to the grapevine, has cemented decades-long partnership with SAPI, through the profitable distributorship of SAPI's UFC catsup and Suro Pati vinegar, among other condiments.

Golden Chamber is more interesting. It was there that to the investment building company held by Antonio, the "Campus Family Trust."

Allow him to be Frisak

COCKTALES sat a Two-paragraph "Heard through the grapevine" item on Friday saying former solicitor General Frisaldo Chavez lost the Ombudsman seat he filed against GMA adviser Roberto S. Romulo for failure to present "not a single piece of evidence."

Questions of Policies

Honorato C. Gonzaga

policy that, somehow, was issued to a Muslim. Sure enough, a death claim was filed. The claim manager, a dear friend of mine, asked to see the beneficiary's cedula. The manager looked at him and asked, "Aren't you the one here promised to ride the coffin in the dead insured?" The beneficiary was a Muslim.

This incident is not an isolated case. As a result, insurance companies consider a Muslim a moral hazard, which is simply not insurable.

Today although there are over 11,000 life insurance agents employed all over the archipelago, not a single one, as far as I know, is a Muslim. Also, there is not a single Muslim employed in the offices of the 124 insurance companies operating in the country.

What does this all mean? This means that our Muslim brothers and sisters are needlessly losing the benefits of insurance. In the event, heaven forbid, when the father of the family passes away, the widow is left with nothing with which to take care of the children. In the unsure lived, the insurance companies do not bar/ease the savings of the Muslim community. These harvested savings help to develop the country.

The Muslim communities in Mindanao have yet to enter the modern era. One of the major characteristics of a modern country is a robust insurance industry in its midst, with aggressive agents in every street corner soliciting...so to speak, prospective buyers.

I doubt whether the anti-Muslim bias in the insurance industry is one of the causes of the rebellion. I hope/ taken for/both insurance, company brotherhood, if our Muslim brothers and sisters wish to enjoy the benefits of insurance, they just have to learn to qualify—as non-Muslims do.

In return, Chavez fired off a swarming email, which we are reprinting in full glory, sans for minor editing.

"You are correct. I did not lose all the government police cases during my watch as Solicitor General. I lost only 7 ... out of 81 government police cases ... a winning average of about 92 percent victories in Supreme Court cases.

"... Since I come next to you, you must know Gma's batting average of victories to cases is 67 percent.

"My and my law firm's record and competence as litigation counsel be gauged or whether/ does by this strange and erroneous decision/ by the Ombudsman of my complaint against Roberto S. Romulo.

"The dismissal ... looks like a midnight decision of Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo whose stint as Ombudsman relative significance only in its consequences. I have yet to receive my copy of the dismissal order but strangely about a day before Marcelo resigned, Romulo obviously got a copy. Instead, Romulo's press statement thereon and were around town jubilating. Surely, Romulo had direct access to Marcelo.

"I am confidently filing a motion for reconsideration and if this is not conveyed by the new Ombudsman, the matter will surely be elevated to the Supreme Court which, I am sure, will not turn a blind eye on the 2-inch documents which serve as evidence in my complaint.

"It is too early and therefore premature for Romulo and his panel backs to glass and cock-brass."

[Cocktales] commenter blow-up understand why the Senate had voted to indefinitely ban Chavez from its grounds and any of its tenants and how long.)

Heard through the grapevine

DESPITE the Department of Justice order to stop the withdrawal of the complaint, Alabang RTC Judge Jaime Mejia insists on continuing the trial/s case filed against the Corona-based health board of directors. A hearing is scheduled on Wednesday, even with the complainants, ex-Audi distributor Hoss and Fred Rodrigues, already declining the payment of filing fees of/under/166 million.

[Email: cocktales_pdi@philstar.net or cocktales_pdi@inq7.net and Fred Rodrigues, already declining the payment of filing fees of/under/166 million.]

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BUSINESS

Inflation rate seen to breach 9% mark in '06

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By Michelle V. Ramos

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT Authority believes that inflation will breach the 9-percent mark next year since the value-added tax rate is increased from 10 to 12 percent in February as stipulated under the VAT Reform Law.

Nesda projections in particular showed that, under a 12-percent VAT regime average, inflation would settle at 9.2 percent in 2006.

The new VAT law states that the government may only raise the VAT rate by two-percentage points until year six (to) nonetheless VAT collections as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) must be at least 3.0 percent, and the budget deficit must be 1.5 percent of GDP or higher.

In recent years, VAT collections had always exceeded 3 percent of GDP and the budget deficit would surpass 1.5 percent of the economic growth. Based on this trend, officials are almost sure that the VAT rate will be raised next year.

The VAT law, implemented last Nov. 1, suspended the coverage of the tax to exclude previously exempted products, such as oil and electricity, as well as medical and legal services.

Nesda projected that inflation in the 1st quarter of 2006 might reach 8.8 percent, in the second quarter, it might be 9.4 percent, in the third, 9.5 percent, and in the fourth, 8.2 percent.

Since VAT is an indirect tax, businesses can simply pass on the charge to consumers through higher prices, which may accelerate inflation.

With inflation projected to go as high as 9 percent next year, economic managers may have to resort to measures to control the government's monetary, credit targets.

The Development Budget Coordination Committee has already assumed in its 2006 program that inflation will range between 6 and 6.5 percent.

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THE EMPOWERED: source with their winning looks; (sorry for the pun), from left: Christine, Clarissa, Margie, Tina, Corrie, Mitch, Amy, Cheryl and Elizabeth.

MEN OF BUSINESS: (l-r), Ron, Rushard Dustin L. Lucas.

It's not all biz, the buzz is it's home

By Ronnagh M.

day's business and economic stories in a computerized, Internet-enabled niche of the Inquirer building in Makati City.

It was in October 1986 when I joined the Inquirer. With $60-Meditz as business editor, I covered the corporate beat. Reporters Jessica Dorning, Cheryl Quimbo and Emerito Perez handled the rest of the economic coverage.

The editor in chief of the Inquirer then was the late Luis D. Beltran, my Journalism professor at the University of the Philippines. He told me to look him up after graduation and, after two days short from jobless, I did just that.

The Business Section had a high turnover of reporters then, and I guess that also accidentally put me there to stay for one. I guess I passed because, after 19 years, I am still here.

And I have been witness to the tremendous changes the Business Section has gone through.

When the late President Marcos was ousted and Corazon C. Aquino took over, the economy and businesses began to perk up. The stock market also, breaking records and running over volumes unheard of in the history of the local bourse.

Early years

Publishing all-night were the main story late at that time. And business reporters were often on the phone for reactions from executives and key government economic officials.

Being a business reporter at that time was no walk in the park...there was no Internet, and the mobile phone and wireless communication were still a long way from our shores.

Business reporters usually left their beats by 5 p.m. to go to their respective offices. Reporters would write stories using manual typewriters. Editors used red pens to edit the stories before sending these off to the typesetters.

During stockholders' meetings, or last conferences or interviews, reporters would "phone in" their stories until the business editor would type them.

Traffic was obviously much lighter, then. I was able to score the fastest of Internal Revenue in the mornings, the BIR by lunch time, and still met the 5 p.m. deadline at the office.

At the time, the Business Section was relegated to a page or two of the main section of the Inquirer.

The first business editor of the Inquirer was Ferdie Sanchez who would close the section two days in advance. That was early 1986. Hilo Muller stayed less than a year.

Taking Muller's place was Leo Dacanalis, who used to work for the defunct Business Day. I recall that Dacanalis was taken in preparation for changes in the Business Section—principally spinning it off as a separate section.

Male-dominated then

By the time the Inquirer moved to the BF Condominium Building in Intramuros in 1987, it was already a separate section.

Slowly the Business Section evolved. Special reports were done. Efforts were made to produce more comprehensive articles. But at that time, there were only three reporters and the beats being covered were trade and industry, banking and finance, and SEC.

Joshua Ortuoste, who covered trade, left to strike closer. I took over his beat. Rita Villadiego, one of the provincial correspondents, was taken in to cover SEC.

Before long, Dacanalis was bid adieu. Ruby Paterno, then Asiaweek Philippines bureau chief, moved to the Sunday Inquirer. Samuel Tedemo, who used to be with Asiaweek daily, eventually became the Inquirer's new business editor.

Sometime in 1990, the Inquirer again moved to another office, this time, near UP Diliman in Quezon, Manila.

During the term of Dacanalis and Tedemo, the Business Section corner was just that—a corner with one desk for the editor. Reporters typed their stories in the reporters' pool.

Today, the Business Business Section is still a corner...but much bigger. It has six tables for the five reporters and an editor's cubicle.

The staff of the Business Section has also changed.

Sammy was tapped to join the corporate side of the Inquirer. Vince Ignacio, who used to cover the Malacañang beat, became acting business editor briefly while the search for a permanent replacement went on.

He did not stay long at the desk, realizing he was really more suited to be current affairs columnist.

Raul Morales, the current business editor of the Inquirer, was taken in. He used to be the business editor of the defunct The Manila Chronicle.

Soon after, Arlene Chipongian and Corrie Navarro, also from The Chronicle, were also taken in.

Growing up in the '90s

The Business Section grew in the '90s. There were Raul, Corrie, Arlene, Bea and another reporter from the Chronicle—Bess delos Reyes.

Arlene eventually became assistant business editor. Corrie covered trade, Bess took on SEC, and I covered banking. Bea did corporate news and other beats.

Changes were continually made in the section. Regular meetings were held among the staff to discuss how to further improve the section. The efforts were not for naught—the Inquirer Business Section has been a regular recipient of business journalism awards from the 1990s to the present.

On top of the weekly special reports, the section runs Inquirer Insider (a chapter of her's also has Management Styles, which high lights a CEOs manner of running his business and people.

In Marketing Strategy, companies are analyzed, from the sale of their products to the advertisements undertaken.

Arlene Chipongian eventually got married and settled in Hong Kong. Corrie became the assistant business editor.

Lifestyling

In 1997, the business section was born. It started with Business Mondays—a name given by business editor in chief Letty J. Magsaysay who wanted to give impersonal business a face.

After four months, due to the success of the Monday features, management decided to create another features section—Business Friday. Before the end of the year, Business Sunday was born.

The "lifestyling" of the Business Section was evident by the Sunday section.

It was imitated by the other newspapers—a mini tribute to the Inquirer's success.

The members of the Business Section now are: Raul S. Morales, business editor; Corrie Baltazar Navarro, assistant business editor; myself; assistant business editor Rushard Dustin Lucas; reporters Tina Arceo-Dumlao and Eric Ohana.

The reporters are Clarissa E. Batino, who covers telecommunications, Boris Gamboa, banking, Christine Dacanay, agriculture, Ian Demanage, trade and industry, Abigail Bo, energy, Mitch Arce, insurance, Bach Gaylican, the stock market, and Dan Lanas, who does special reports. Amy Remo is the editorial assistant.

Over the years, journalists have come and gone in the Business Section. Those who left had personal reasons for doing so. But most of those who join the Inquirer Business Section stay. I should know.

Raul and Corrie have been around for 14 years; Tina, Clarissa and Christine, eight years; Boris, seven years; Abi and Amy, four years.

Perhaps it is because the Inquirer Business Section is a family. And the company is among the best in the industry. Over the past 18 years, its staff have been among the most respected and rewarded in the industry.

Proactive

The section is very proactive in continuously improving its members. It has annual planning sessions, roundtable discussions with CEOs and top decision-makers in the business community. It sends regularly to major training programs and seminars to hone them in their craft.

Over the years, even though the beat-ons and hard times, the Inquirer's Business Section has remained steadfast in its goal of serving the stockholders of investor reportage. It has been this way for 20 years, and will most likely go on for the next 20 years.

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NutriAsia to buy Lorenzo stake in Del Monte for $206M

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

NUTRIASIA PACIFIC LTD., A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN candidate Ignacio Arsenio Campos Jr. and San Miguel Corp., has decided to buy the stake held by the Lorenzo family in Del Monte Pacific Ltd. for $206.5 million or P11 billion.

In a letter to the board of directors of Del Monte Pacific, company managing director Marcos Lorenzo confirmed that MCI Inc., his family's holding company in Del Monte, had agreed to sell its 526.2-million shares in Del Monte Pacific, or 40.6 percent of the company, to NutriAsia.

Once the sale is completed, the Lorenzos will no longer be shareholders of Del Monte.

SMC, Campos and MCI of the Lorenzos joined forces to bid a takeover bid of the Hong Kong-based Del Monte Pacific.

Exercising its pre-emptive right, MCI decided to match First Pacific's offer to buy up to 29 percent in Del Monte.

This meant that MCI bought an additional 28.7 percent from Dole Philippines Del Monte Holdings Ltd. out of their combined 69 percent in the pineapple brand.

MCI purchased Dole-Del Monte's 28 percent stake at 28.38 cents a share or for a total of $118.6 million.

With Dole's 28.7 percent and MCI's existing 25 percent in Del Monte, MCI effectively lorded up to make to 69.6 percent, which it would sell to NutriAsia Pacific.

Dole-Del Monte's remaining 11 percent out of the 40 percent will be sold during the privatization offer to be made by NutriAsia.

Norman Jeanne Cooper, Carpenter Jr., senior Per, Ltd., the financial advisor of NutriAsia Pacific, said in a disclosure in Singapore that NutriAsia Pacific had offered to acquire Del Monte shares at 28.63 cents a share, valuing the bid launched by Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific at $8.1 cents per share.

The acquisition by Del Monte is one to bring powerful brands and significant scale in the fast growing regional branded food and beverage sector for San Miguel and Campos businesses.

First Pacific Co. earlier offered to pay Dole and Del Monte Holdings $165.6 million to cash for combined 39.72 percent stake, or $8.16 cents a share.

NutriAsia Pacific is controlled by San Miguel, Golden Chamber Investment Ltd. which is the investment holding company of the Campos family, Investment Asia Bond Inc. (SubCo) and the T's-ling family.

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"IGUANA"

Community art calms the storm

By Consuelo C. Tejero

"MAKA," by Organization of Bangles Sculptors

"PABLUHAN"

A year after the deluge, Rey Paz Contreras and other wood artists make peace with Nature's fury and man's shortsightedness

"DINOSAUR"

WHEN FOUR TYPHOONS successively struck the country late last year, one of the hardest hit was Barangay Bangkal in General Nakar town in Quezon province. With turbulent waters and no land to till, the community of fishermen and farmers was reduced to cooking charcoal out of the logs flooded down from the Sierra Madre.

When Ground Stirrings called for private corporations to help in the rehabilitation of depressed communities devastated by the typhoons, Smart Communications Inc. responded with Project Makar Art in Livelihood program. Smart asked wood artist Rey Paz Contreras and his team of Buenbuhid Sculptors to give a workshop on driftwood art to Bangles residents.

In our interview, Contreras related how the first time he visited the place he was "overwhelmed by the abundance of logs scattered everywhere; it was absolutely a wood sculptor's delight."

Eight Buenbuhid members lived on site to give a 10-day basic training to the first batch of 22 men, women and children. In less than five days, an impressive metamorphosis

The residents proved to be ancient workers and craftsmanship artisans. With an abundance of material to work with, they had all the opportunities to polish and master their craft.

"Hindi sila nangbibitiyang sa dulay," says Contreras. "Gawad lang ang gusto. Ang nagkamali, e, di gumalis."

Pres was formed the Organization of Bangles Sculptors, composed of some 20 craftsmen and their families.

Contreras marvels at their work ethic and esprit. "Sa sobe nakaktuwa work, sa totoo nerwad lang. Very, very Pinoy ang pagtrabahuhin. Very, very normal lang na magtrabahuhin as a group. Bahay-bahay sila, magshare. Limited opportunity ang gusto nadoble."

Charm and horror

In May, two months after they started, they held their first show in Manila Philippine Plaza. Some of these exhibited were pieces made just after 10 days of basic training.

Now they just held the first major exhibition of their output, and in the Cultural Center of the Philippines, no less. "Bangles, From Tragedy to Creativity" 38 pieces in hardwood, was recently presented by Smart Communications at Bulwagang Carlos V. Francisco (Little Theater Lobby Wall) of the CCP Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

The sculptural pieces including a five by Contreras and the Buenbuhid Sculptors range from ornamentals to table, from a lampshade with bird mobiles to a cat-water bench. Most dead wood takes on the living forms of fowls and lizards, marine life from fish to starfish to crustaceans, Mother and Child, human torso, masks.

Each piece demonstrates how keenly observant these people are. The pinoftorials, for instance, are specific not just with the species (pis-pis, mudskip, dalagat, alipawis, lapu, barracuda) but also with their movements. They may be simplified forms but well-detailed up to the caudal and dorsal fins. Those

West holds year-end group show

"MASTER Within," by Virgilio Arboleda

FOR THE SECOND YEAR, WEST Gallery has pooled together an impressive list of artists to participate in an [illegible] year-ending group show to still be on view simultaneously at the West Gallery on West Avenue (starting Dec. 4) and at Bill Maganuff (starting Dec. 8). The show runs until Dec. 31.

Participating artists include: Ronald Advincula, Billy Arcilla, Gin Allen, Arnem Abella, Jael Alcantara, Mandaro Alvarado, Bert Antonio, Alfredo Juan Aquilizan, Virgilio Arboleda, Nick Barclay, Rowena Bernal-Galvez, Andrea Bermudez, Nikki Bigbang Sam, Laurence Bonnici.

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Call 412-0306/412-0323. (West Gallery, Pasa Avenue) or 0918-814 (West Gallery Bill Maganuff).

"CITY Forms," by Antonio Lua

"UNTITLED," by Mike Tuazon

CARABAO duo

"COUP d'état"

"LABUYO"

Community art . . .

(From page 1)

are visionary people, after all.

The pieces exude a simple charm, as "Mga Bibi" (group sculpture of long-legged, crowing chicks); "Kuba" (Kids freaking in prong); "Pare-pare" (basically with the graceful part of the wood left untouched as wings, making it appear like a heap of bird-like); "Ascent" (looking rather like a depressive walrus); "Labuyo" (like a pre-rock 'n' fighting fish).

And they have a homespun humor, as in the low pun of "Viking Child" (a duck, what else?); "Air Raid" (duck shaped like an airplane); "Negotiating Peace" (sleeping coins in rubber wood); "Fish Bowl" (rudimentary bowl-shaped like a goldfish); "Scalpel" (pocket-or chisels, okay?). There are simple folk, after all.

Simplicity embodied

There inherent simplicity is embodied chiefly in their rendering of the Mother and Child, where form approaches abstraction. In some of these, the block of wood is simply hollowed, preserved and polished, as in the work of Barbara Hepworth.

To be sure, there are also complicated forms and complex compositions: "Ignatia," "Bulalang," "Bandurang Dagat," "Pusa," "School of Fish," "Dinosaur," "Mayor ng Dagat," "Pinatay Woman," "Nangalang ng Bulang," the so-called narrative chairs, lamp-shade racks and the coffee table set.

"MAG-INA"

All are of hardwoods (a certain species of lumbagang, red and yellow narra, molave) in all kinds.

Contreras says he makes them out any wood, from "10-20 years already dried to the mountain logs embracing as lumber, salvaging or using of [illegible] into floating log rafts." That's where the wood has lost its buoyancy and become quite compact.

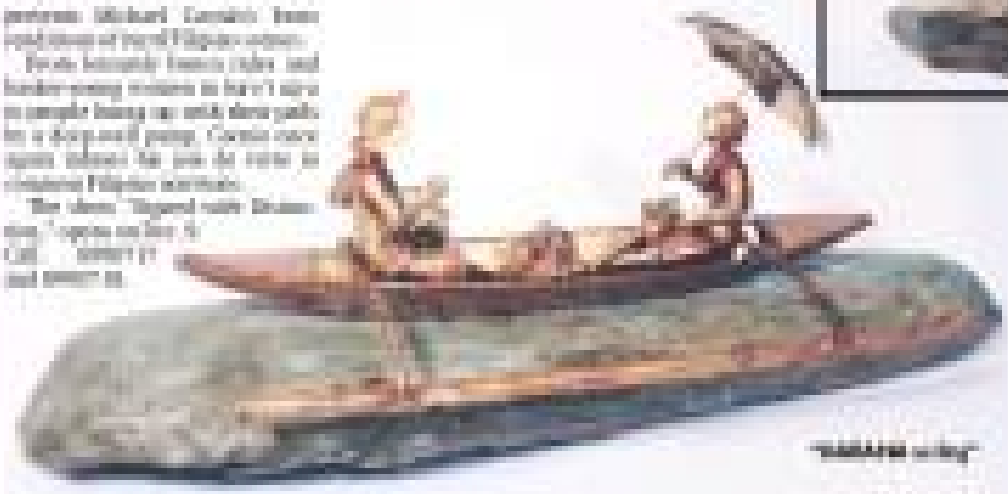
Sir Erich Contreras makes them on a combination of saw and tungsten varnish and linseed oil, which takes 24 hours to dry and as preservative is rich into even seasoned wood. When applied to raw carvings on sun-dried wood, it imparts a dark lacquer effect.

The group has been exhibiting almost every month since May. From selling charcoal for P45 a pack, they are now selling on at P180-P1,000 apiece. And they can already finish an average commercial in 3-4 days, or three bowls in one day.

"Any collaborative if they're interested by commissioned art," says the seasoned sculptor. "Neighborings go and hang over the ranges too. They exhibited in Mexico, which is not a legitimate art venues, and now they have an offered at the CCP which is more legitimate art venues. Payment is long means make the art-ists more."

Contreras envisions that Bangkal has enough skilled wood available to do sculptures for the next 20 years. Why, that's a whole generation of artists.

Cacnio's joys of Pinoy life in brass



Cebu gets its act together for heritage conservation

VERY RARELY IN THE Philippines do provincial leaders recognize the uniqueness of their people and so take the effort to assess their cultural strengths as a prelude to mapping out a program to preserve their cultural identity.

Cebu is among the first provinces to take the step. Spearheaded by Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, provincial government authorities met with prominent Cebuano businessmen and the Archdiocese of Cebu to establish Garbo sa Sugbo (Cebuano Pride) Foundation.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

The private foundation is a landmark. It finally unites the government, Church and business, all normally having divergent visions in the preservation issue. Their common cause is to identify and preserve all aspects of Cebuano heritage. It is a great first step.

What Garbo sa Sugbo Foundation aims is to make each Cebuano aware of his or her people's special story and to eventually be able to tell that story with pride.

Not many Filipinos have pride of place these days, much less pride of country. On the other hand, pride is bred into each Cebuano since birth.

Cebuanos are fiercely proud of their language, their place in Philippine history and their innate sense of entrepreneurship.

The island's geographical location made it the logical hub for the maritime shipping industry in the Philippines.

Cebuano craftsmanship has made the province a respected manufacturing center for export products.

Probably the leading destination in the country, Cebu once promoted itself as an "Island in the Pacific" to escape negative publicity during the turbulent days of Philippine politics. The tourists kept coming.

Tourism has made Cebuanos aware of their island's natural qualities—clear waters, beaches, islets, and dive sites, truly the "Island in the Pacific" as it once claimed to be.

Heritage is another issue. Cebuanos are largely unfamiliar with their heritage. Garbo sa Sugbo Foundation aims to change all that.

As a first step, foundation members representing different sectors of cultural activity committed to completing an inventory of all expressions of Cebuano heritage, including traditional literature, music, art, crafts, cuisine, architecture, heritage towns.

> Garbo sa Sugbo Foundation is out to protect Cebu heritage

What to do next

The next step after the inventory is to determine what to do with all of the cultural riches still existing in the province.

The inventory expands long-established activities for Cebuano cultural regeneration.

One of the most successful activities is the Cebu Heritage Frontier by the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, which has long been documenting architectural heritage in four Spanish colonial towns on the south coast of the island. The program trains locals to respect and preserve their heritage, and introduces community-based cultural tourism programs designed to economically benefit the locals.

Other members of Garbo sa Sugbo Foundation are individually involved with research in traditional Cebuano art, literature, cuisine.

The foundation institutionalizes research activities and provides a central repository for the information.

Documentation of Cebuano culture will lead to the preparation of a cultural heritage plan with programs to establish methods of preservation following internationally prescribed principles, to categorize and prioritize certain areas of preservation, and to determine what public-private cooperation is needed for effective preservation.

A model for public-private cooperation is now in place with the recent provincial declaration of Carcar as a Heritage Town and the passing of the Carcar heritage bill which designates heritage zones, levels of protection for heritage structures, and, most importantly, enlists the participation of the Carcar Heritage Conservation Society to provide technical expertise in the task of preserving their historic town.

Unknown to many, much is being done for the conservation of heritage in Cebu.

Another example, the Santo Niño Basilica and Cam Gorordo Museum, both national monuments protected by the National Historical Institute, are being conserved under the supervision of qualified restoration architects. This indicates there's awareness that restoration is a specialized activity that cannot be done by unqualified professionals.

Despite the work being done to conserve the heritage of Cebu, much is still being lost.

The Garbo sa Sugbo program intends to reawaken Cebuanos to their unique heritage and to add the dimension of cultural pride as a defining factor to the already existing Cebuano sense of pride.

After regaining pride of its natural and cultural richness, it will be time for Cebu to at last step out of its island boundaries and offer its cultural rediscovery and preservation experience to the rest of the country as a model for nation-building through establishing a sense of Filipino pride.

Feedback is welcome at ephil-lalon@hotmail.com

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UNTITLED, BY LYDIA VELASCO

"Kulay Pasko," a group exhibit of Kulay Marikina artists headed by Lydia Velasco is ongoing at Hues Gallery until Dec. 15. Sponsored by Davies Paint, Hues Gallery is in MC Depot at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

A joyous celebration of life and music

By Antonio Hila
Contributor

Yuco's hallmark is a world-class, debonair sound that steadily resonates with life itself

HE'S CHOSE TWO CHAIRS TO STRADDLE, resting the bottom like a single vessel, his right hand gripping it firmly, like he usually did seven years decades ago, before musicians with whom he made absorbing symphonic music.

He was an assistant conductor of the defunct Manila Symphony Orchestra, hailed as Asia's best, under late Jose Iturbi Jr. Later, he was the first Filipino music director of the Philippine Ballet Theater.

Yuco's entry in the world of conducting was preceded by momentous achievements as a violinist. After completing his studies at the Juilliard School of Music under the guidance of the eminent pedagogue Ivan Galamian, he won the International ARD Violin Competition in Munich, Germany, played with the Munich-based Strauss String Quartet, and was confined in several countries.

He was the first concertmaster of the Manchester National Theater and the Wagner Festival Orchestra in Bayreuth. He was a professor at the State Academy of Music in Hannover, Germany.

Yuco became concertmaster of the old Cultural Center of the Philippines Philharmonic Orchestra, now known as the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, upon the behest of then First Lady Imelda R. Marcos. He was its music director for almost two decades, and was honored with the title Conductor Laureate.

Phenomenon

The term "maestro" is a much talked about phenomenon. His hallmark is a world-class, debonair sound that steadily resonates with life itself. He knows patience with the spirit he has objectified as the genre for performance with the orchestra, the counterpoint respect from the musicians, which is the very soul of unforgettable music-making.

He honored the homage given him recently by the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) at the PhilAm Life Theater on the occasion of his 75th birthday. Symphonic music was again at its best as he conducted the composite MPO in a performance of Ariel's Ignoto Rhapsody, Dvorak's "From the New World" Symphony and Mendelssohn's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in E minor, with young violinist Angelo Maria "Chino" S. Cuenco as soloist.

In fact, the program was similar to those the maestro had done in so many symphonic concerts before. This recital consisted, however, was unique as so many musicians who, at one time or another played with the maestro, performed with the regular MPO members.

Significant additions

It was made more significant with the engagement of Gutierrez as soloist. The maestro taught and helped him secure a study grant in Germany. Gutierrez just finished the first year of his post-college schooling at the Hochschule for Musik und Theater Munchen in Munich under the tutelage of noted pedagogue Prof. Ana Chumachenco.

The maestro (at a fifteen-minute rest stop, holding his violin in an upright position. His notes were elegant, clear and striking, he played with gusto, nearly rendering Mendelssohn's work with vital dispatch. From the first to the last movements, he caressed his bows, especially in the second movement, showing his virtuosity in the middle section style evoked characters and figurations and double stops.

There was no doubting the fact that, in the end, Gutierrez's vision would grow more, although what was outstanding about them during the performance were their mellowness. Indeed, an hint of stillness was heard. Truly, in the end, the violinist would become a major talent.

Yuco additionally conducted the MPO. His collaboration with Gutierrez was in tight support that lingering was a delight. And so it was in the symphonic numbers. He exuded authority in his rhapsodic of Ariel's work, which was an effective opener. In the bigger symphonic work of Dvorak, he exhibited his baton with a firm grasp, making the performance one of the finest ever heard on stage.

The celebration was completed with the reading of an ode to the maestro. Executive director Cecile C. Alvarez of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts informed the audience of the agency's resolution to help building artists.

The celebration would not have been complete without the cake brought on stage by MPO founder and music director Redel T. Calvente, and the singing of "Happy Birthday."

CARRIE-ANNE Hutchinson, pianist

JENNIFER Hines, mezzo-soprano

LEAH Woods Friedman, soprano

The best of New York opera come to Manila

RYAN Taylor, baritone

JOSHUA Winograde, bass-baritone

THE VELIANI FOUNDation and the Rotary Gift of Life Inc., charitable organizations ministering to poor children, are the beneficiaries of "Beloved," a multi-bill concert showcasing top-notch talents from New York's opera scene and the basic creations of Irene Veneri, on Dec. 9 at the Makati Shangri-La's Grand Ballroom.

Featured in the opera concert are baritone Ryan Taylor, soprano Lee Woods Friedman, bass-baritone Joshua Winograde, mezzo-soprano Jennifer Hines, tenor Scott Piper and pianist Carrie-Anne Hutchinson.

Taylor is famous for his memorable performances in various productions of "Salome," "La Boheme," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Friedman, a young lyric soprano, first performed in "Rigoletto" with the Grand Opera Theater.

Winograde has been hailed as "the one to keep our eyes on" by American Recital magazine. He has performed in productions of "Don Giovanni" and "Vive La Musique" among others. Winograde studied at the famed Juilliard School in New York.

Mezzo-soprano Hines has been hailed by Opera News for her "rich, dark timbre," adding that her voice is "so rich and colored she easily steals any scene in which she appears." She made her debut in 2005 in "Mirror and Sand" at the Metropolitan Opera.

Mezzo is a genre whose artistry and sensibility has been praised by the New York Times. She is also assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

The repertoire consists of arias and choice pieces from such classics as "La Boheme" and "Carmen."

Act II of "Beloved" belongs to Puccini's 40-piece collection. The children are expected to enhance the drama of the evening, with Veneri being a lover of opera and having designed for musical productions in the past.

The Veliani Foundation, since its birth in 1992, has helped thousands of children who have been victims of various forms of abuse and exploitation.

Gift of Life Inc. is a multi-faceted history international service program helping needy children who require corrective heart surgery.

Foreign dignitaries who are gracing the event include Robert Owens, founder and chair, Gift of Life International; Abraham Gordon, vice president of Rotary International; David Sullivan, Rotary Club governor-elect district governor; and Chad Dewey, national spokesperson for Gift of Life. Also attending is Rafael Barbanera, Homecoming Committee member, to choose Rotary International president for 2007-2008. Chairs of the event are Ambassador Alberto del Rosario, Moldy Cojuangco, Moly Hechanova and Lulu del Rosario.

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